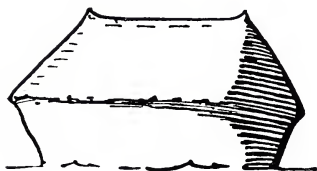


HOME AND COUNTRY ARTS

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By W. R. LETHABY



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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION - - -	I
II	DRUDGERY REDEEMED: BEAUTY IN COMMON THINGS - - -	18
III	DRAWING FOR EVERYONE - -	25
IV	DESIGNING AS A GAME - -	34
V	SEWING ARTS - - - -	45
VI	SEEING LONDON - - -	64
VII	VILLAGE ARTS AND CRAFTS -	77
VIII	WORK FESTIVALS - - -	95
IX	FARMS AND COTTAGES - -	109



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ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	PAGE
1 From Windmill Hill	2
2 Road across the Common	5
3 Road to the Green	7
4 The Green	12
5 Cottage Gate	19
6 Oxfordshire Waggon	20
7 Farm Buildings	21
8 A Northumbrian Loaf	22
9, 10, 11, 12 Butter Prints	23
13 A Cottage Chair	24
14 Drawing of The Snow	26
15 Drawing of Nasturtium	27
16 Drawing of Petunia	27
17 Drawing of The Steeplechase	29
18 Drawing of The Horse	31
19, 20 Drawings of Tulips	36
21, 22 Paper Patterns	38
23 Design of Coloured Papers stuck down	39
24 Braiding Patterns	40
25 Knot-work Patterns	41
26 Letter form Patterns	42
27 Birds in a Bush	43

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	PAGE
28 Alphabet Card Design	44
29 Children's Embroidery Designs	47
30 A "Blanket" Star	49
31, 32, 33, 34 35 Quilting Patterns	50, 51, 52, 53, 54
36 Embroidered Quilt	56
37 Specimens of Old Bucks. Lace	60
38 Hand-drawn Patterns of Lace	61
39 Thames Embankment, a Wet Night	65
40 St. Paul's Cathedral	68
41 Westminster Abbey	73
42 Westminster Abbey—Stone Roof of Henry VII's Chapel	75
43 A Country Waggon	79
44 Country Waggon	81
45 Blacksmith's Fire-Shovel	82
46 Brass Horse-Trappings	83
47 Unloading Hops at the Oast House	101
48 The Fox and Hounds Inn, Barley	106
49, 50 Hayricks at Blatherwyck	110, 111
51 Old Weaversden	112
52 Idenden Farm	113
53 Cole Farm	114
54 Child's Armchair	115
55 Simple Chair	115
56 Land Girl Milking	117

HOME AND COUNTRY ARTS

I

INTRODUCTION

“The old education supplied a scanty schooling for its young people ; but apart from school it afforded a discipline of circumstance to nourish the spirit and sustain the energies.”

The Children of England.

THE little chapters which follow were written in London. Now I have been staying for two months in the pure country of the Wessex land during the amazing burst and rush of the early summer and it is all infinitely more wonderful than the memory had held. I am on “Windmill Hill,” a high, rough common with an outlook over a wide, flat, agricultural vale. The plain is a vast, crazy patch-work of various greens and yellows, with trees running along the seams and collecting here and there into knots or covering whole patches by themselves. Some of the grass fields are only partly cut and have a broad lighter margin of smoother surface around the central space. Farm-houses, cottages, hay-ricks are sprinkled about with smaller dots of cows, showing dark or white, in between. Short lengths of roads appear at intervals, some of them climbing

the hills towards the distance. The grey-blue edge of visible things is so far away that I am led to think of the sea in that direction and then of

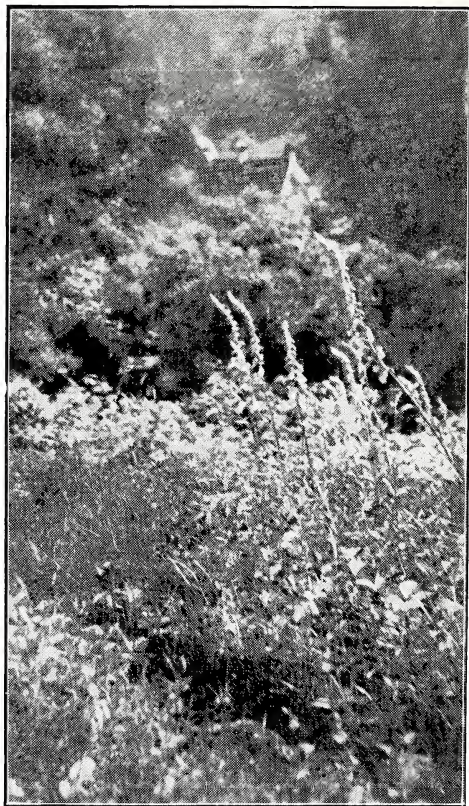


FIG 1. *From Windmill Hill.*

the whole of England as a real map of the land set down in the real sea. And it comes into my mind afresh that, wherever one is, the top and centre of the whole world is there too.

The Common is now covered with tall fern, gorse-bushes thickly matted together, bramble and wild-raspberry bushes, great burdocks and foxgloves which shoot up like fiery rockets, rushes, grasses, nettles and thistles which spring and spray out like fountains, clivers, convolvulus and black briony, all pushing up and up with the mysterious energy of life. Then there are bushes of many sorts, holly and hazel, thorn, birch, elder, oak, ash and willow, wild rose in flower, elder now covered with big flat platters of blossom and tangles of sweet-scented honeysuckle.

Smooth turf ways, like little green streams, wind in and about this chaos of life and the sweet short grass is freckled over and patterned with brightest tiny growths, yellow tormentilla, shoes-and-stockings, dwarf hawksweed, buttercups, red and white clover, white and yellow bed-straw, self-heal, blue-eyes, harebell and thyme. A week or two ago there were violets and milkworts and red-rattle. Every day changes the aspect of things in this furnace of life.

Along the margins of the paths are St. John's wort, star-wort, enchanter's nightshade, red robins, wood-sage, avens, yarrow and wild parsley or "Queen Anne's lace." In one corner is a big clump of wild sun-flowers showing scores of gold blossoms; in another is pale drooping comfrey and bugloss of intensest heavenly blue. Where the Common is crossed by a road, thick, well-grown timber trees stretch out from a neighbouring park and elsewhere on the hill are two or three groups of dark firs.

On this Common the commonest things that live attain a surprising beauty. Thistles compete with the stature of a man, a patch, like a bed of tall feathery mignonette, is only of sorrel bursting into a lovely spray of tiniest florets; the nettles are so well grown that one cannot but admire their finely shaped leaves; the bramble blossoms are little roses pink and white; glades of flowering grass waver in the breeze like ruddy smoke. The clean, bright sweetness, fairness and health-seeming of it, come, one feels at once, from the purity of the air. Purity of air seems to be a condition of truly healthy life.

The windmill is now out of use, but the old sails remained not long ago and folk still living remember the grinding of grain and how it was brought from far around: "Even from —, six miles away."

A hundred yards away "down the road" is The Green, a hamlet of a few houses gathered near a spring. The cottages are of stone and brick, thatched or tile-roofed and have strips of the loveliest gardens. A little Chapel and the "Fox and Hounds" Inn are side by side and look equally innocent. Close by are well-kept allotments. The village as a whole seems to be made up of a number of detached hamlets and I believe this is known to be a characteristic of one type of old English land-settlement.

The main village is below the slope of the Common, more than half a mile away. The Church, the School, a Post Office, several pleasant general-store sort of country shops are

here and, I believe, there is a prosperous Women's Institute.

The centre of the village is where two roads cross ; these are very ancient and were probably British trackways. Close by the crossing are an ancient church, a tithe barn and what I suppose is an old Priest's house. The chancel of the Church was built in the thirteenth century, the Nave in the fourteenth and the Tower in the fifteenth century. One piece of walling in the



FIG. 2. *Road across the Common.*

Chancel, older than any other part, looks like Saxon work. The Churchyard is so lovely that it seems to make death natural and beautiful too. The old grave-stones, grey and honest-looking things, are of the local stone and were evidently made by the masons of the neighbourhood. The harsh foreign and pretentious white marble tombs did not come into general vogue until about 1850. Up to this time it was also the

custom to inscribe on the stones verses that seem to have been home-made for the occasion—that is, they show unashamed personal feeling. It is only for about two generations that people, frightened by what has been called education from daring to express themselves, have dropped into the general use of a few flat formulas suggested by the “monument” makers. One of my chief purposes here is to call attention to the beauty and interest of all home-made and neighbour-made things.

The “walks” round about are more beautiful than tongue can tell; pleasant by-roads not overrun by motors, little threads of paths through fields with cows lying still as big red boulders, bits of wood and low ground full of meadow-sweet and willow-herb. Only a mile away is the edge of chalk downs. There are now many new haystacks about, for it has been a good grass year; one had heated, and a long galley had been cut into its mass to cool it, but inside it long remained hot as an oven. Other older ricks have been sliced down like cake. The farm buildings are as natural as the haystacks. From the downs a cathedral steeple may be seen far away on the horizon; as the cloud shadows pass by, it shows as a thin flash of light. Great prehistoric camps and monuments may be visited on a long walk.

Within about six miles of Windmill Hill are four or five ancient little towns, several beautiful churches and a very romantic ruined castle. Such is one small patch of England and I write this to suggest that as every place is the middle

of the world geographically, so it is also a historical centre. Reasonable and understandable geography and history would both begin where they may be seen and touched!

On the roads one meets loaded hay carts, a dozen cows feeding on the hedgerows, a man on a



FIG. 3. *Road to the Green.*

horse with a second tied to its tail (the other day I heard a woman say to her little girl, "Here, catch hold of my tail and come along"). A white goat and kid are tethered on the Green and here I notice a hen who proudly minds a family of waddling ducks. In the evening one hears the sharp sounds of quoits

being played and the cries of children's games—a delightful concert.

.

Of the people I am told most interesting things. Two old ladies who are over eighty years of age live separately and alone. One of them, eighty-eight and keeping a little sweet shop, has travelled widely with the grand world, living long in Italy and Athens and knowing the children of royalties. She says that her own people have lived in the hamlet for three hundred years and that her father built one of the cottages when he married. Another woman, over seventy years old, and blind, makes poetry—"she has quite a bookful." By the intervention of a friend I have a copy of two of the poems, but I suppose they should not be quoted without permission. However, I think I may say that one has the theme or "plot" of a swarm of gnats seen in December "dancing o'er and o'er the Green":

Perhaps you think the spring is here,
But you are mistaken much, I fear.
The winter scarcely has begun,
Although you're revelling in the sun.

Now, isn't that quite pretty?

In other places I have heard of aged people who preserved the old common habit of making up verses; of one man it was said that "he was a musician and knew about numbers."

The tomb inscriptions just mentioned are examples of the tradition and I print here one copied from a village two miles away, partly because it is so decayed that it may be doubted

whether the original will ever again be deciphered.
It is given here as :

A SPECIMEN OF HOME-MADE VERSE.

Go, sweet example of untainted Youth,
Of modest Reason and pacifick Truth.
Go, just of Word, in every thought sincere,
Who knew no thought but that the World might hear.

Of gentlest Manners, unaffected Mind,
Lover of Peace and Friend of Human Kind.
Composed in Suffering and in Joy sedate,
Good without Noise, without Pretention great.

Go, live, for Heaven's eternal Year is thine.
Go, and exalt thy Mortal to Divine.
Yet take these Tears, Mortality's Relief,
And till we share your joys, forgive our Grief.

These little Rites in Stone and Verse receive,
'Tis all a Father, all a Friend can give.

In Memory of Mary, daughter of Thomas and Mary
Lampard, who departed this Life April the 23rd, 1772, Aged
19 years.

Some Lampards I may add still live on The
Green. And in writing this I am reminded
of another similar poem which ends with the
line "I am no poet ; Love made me do it."

We forget in specialising and professionalising
everything "literary" and "artistic" that music,
poetry, art and the drama all sprang out of the
hearts of the people. Indeed, it is only when an
aptitude is widely spread that special art will be
of much worth. You cannot have big waves

except on a broad sea. Great "works of art" are necessarily few and far between, they come by opportunity as the crests of large movements. No country is now so starved for Folk Music as England. Poetry, story-telling and music have to be regained by the people who have been "frightened stiff" by the pretensions of those who talk of genius and have turned these precious things into special trades. Everybody ought to set about making up little sayings and verses and singing little tunes as a preparation for great poetry and music. Unless these things are renewed from the old source they will dry up. In a book on the East I read: "The Japanese peasant goes from no place of interest without leaving his short sonnet, an art-form within reach of the simplest." That is the thought; art-forms common to everybody have to be re-discovered.

Much of our country speech is still dignified and "poetic"—"There, rest your heart contented," I overheard a woman say the other day and the best simile I ever heard was used by a farmer who described something as very white—"as white as a hound's tooth." People's thoughts, where converse is free and natural, tend to the use of sayings and proverbs. I remember an old Devonshire farmer who in explaining that he did not do much now, added—"You can't have two forenoons to one day."

Home and Country has lately printed some short stories, taken down from the words of the actual relaters, which have the vividness of old folk-lore. I hope that some collections of such stories will

be published in book form. As Tolstoy noticed, the people can tell stories still.

.

In going about from my centre I was distressed to see the number of cottages which are decayed and ruined beyond habitation. Some were actually torn down; one has its thatched roof fallen in, although the little garden is still tidy and roses are flowering at the porch. I have noticed similar sad facts in other districts and there must be some general cause now at work which leads to the withholding of timely repair and to the ultimate destruction of our English cottages. This is a very large question indeed from many points of view; from that of the landscape and of the character of the country it is of tremendous importance. More than anything else these cottages, I suppose, form the thought of England in our minds.

My next saddening observation was of the great and rapidly spreading extent of the nuisance of throwing out rubbish in an unregulated way. It is going far to soil the purity of the whole country. All about the once sweet commons and tidy roads are "dumps" of tins, old pots and pans, broken glass and other repulsive horrors. What seems to be an inevitable destruction of England's surface by the ever-extending towns, factories and shunting-grounds of railways, is disquieting enough; to this we must add the fields which grow advertisements and the increasing chicken-run and shanty kind of farming. Now, beyond all this is the growing habit of

looking on the land as a mere backyard for rubbish deposits. Nothing is so urgently required in all our villages as a well considered method of

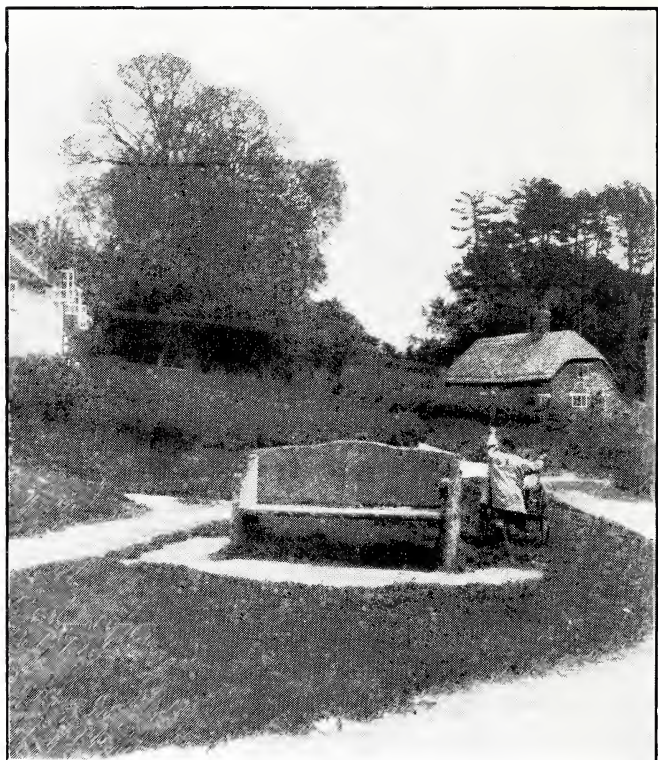


FIG. 4. *The Green.*

dealing with this refuse nuisance in order to tidy up the present disorder.

The decay of country crafts is discussed at some length further on in this little book and all I will add here is the remark that the loss is

double : that of the arts themselves and the loss in the lives of the people who practised them. For the exercise of high skill is a fine mode of life.

Now of the people. I wonder whether I may record my impressions, right or wrong. The children seemed to me generally well cared for and happy, many were wonderfully bright and confident ; the women maintain their courage ; the older men are more puzzled and reserved ; the younger men, especially the youngest—the boy-men—appear healthy, good-looking and intelligent, but they seem at a loose end, as not seeing at what to aim. The other Sunday afternoon there was a group of more than a dozen well-dressed youths just hanging about listlessly at the Windmill. They were a fine lot of young man and behaving nicely as becomes the English of King Alfred, but I could not help wondering what their interests were. Speaking generally, and of towns as well as of the country, I suppose that our young men, notwithstanding their good reading, writing and arithmetic kind of education, have less of folk traditions, story, arts, music and poetry than any youths of English stock have ever had.

The present type of book education seems to have confused them rather than to have given them inner strength and heart food. Modern education has been more concerned with the things of the letter than with the things of the spirit. It must return to life and livelihood. The people who call themselves “ educated ” will have to learn over again that education should

be conceived rather as an apprenticeship to worthy life and work than as formal knowledge of words, names and dates. We need a type of education which will furnish the "heart" and turn the mind to endeavour and discipline and which will lead on to doing, making and inventing. Even in little children's schools I should like occasional exhibitions of things made by themselves. Living and working are the two great realities.

In older days the customs, traditions and labours of the country constituted the people's equipment; now our type of word knowledge has raised the idea that "education" is different from and more than these. In a thoughtful book by Prof. J. T. Findlay, called *The Children of England*, which I have just been reading, he points out how up to recent days young people were taught by direct contact with things. "Crowded streets and cities are as unwholesome for children as they are for animals and plants. The village served as an educational institute, where young and old exchanged experience. In the foreground of the picture we must place the homestead, for the children, far more than is the case nowadays, found the materials of interest and of culture in the activities of the home. Our ancestors and their children found education through the crafts; we pursue the same end by discussing them. Education is the work of the people; grateful as the common folk will be for the guidance of the government and for the inspiration of their great men, the movement in education will be advanced or retarded in the main by popular impulse."

Our present supposition that education is knowing words rather than things and deeds will produce many unforeseen results. In yesterday's paper (July 23rd, 1923) there was a paragraph so opportunely close to my purpose that I must make a quotation as an illustration of my own meaning. It was addressed from Cape Town, and headed "Matriculation Mania." "The danger of attempting to build up a white civilisation as a mere superstructure upon a basis of black labour is the key-note of the speeches which General Smuts is now delivering, pointing out that many of the problems of the Union spring from the disinclination of the whites to do other work than supervise natives. Let us South Africans endeavour to rid ourselves of the false pride that it is derogatory to be trained in trades as carpenters, builders, blacksmiths and market gardeners. This kind of pride will lead the white race to ruin in South Africa. These warnings are necessary and timely for the matriculation mania is resulting in a most alarming flood of clerks. Youths despise artisanship because all kinds of labour are regarded as more or less Kaffir's work. Consequently the supply of clerks is hopelessly in excess of demand. There are thus, growing numbers of so-called educated young men who are unemployed because they are unfitted for anything but clerical work."

Yes, indeed, and quite so. We, too, have a similar problem at home. It seems naturally to follow from the notion that education is knowing about books that all kinds of labour will be thought of "as more or less Kaffir's work." It is

not enough to tell people that labour is good for them ; it has to be shown that all recognise and reverence work as the great first necessity of life. A way must be found of saying to the young men of the nation : "See those rubbish heaps ; this is your England. Can't we clean it up ? "

Education for modern life must become a many-sided thing and it will have to be acknowledged that the shepherd and the sailor hold traditions of life different from, but not inferior to, those of the bank clerk, the journalist or the advertising agent. What is most wanted in school education is the conception and formation of a common yet sacred—sacred because common—folk-lore in which every English child alike shall share ; a tradition for our race, a foundational stratum of ideas to give strength to the "heart" and substance to life—something short, but deep and high, about our country's story and about men who have done their duty ; some opening of minds to the wonder of nature and to the essence of poetry, music, and art. We have to re-establish a traditional story as a common bond of the folk.

As it is obvious that the country and country-life are and must be the basis of national strength, we require some definite teaching which will direct our minds more consciously to the great things of nature, common life and common work. That the country is the natural home for children none will doubt. The art of living is best learnt where they may meet the welcome fresh air and enter into close contact with growing things, animal life, seasons and harvests. As life in the

country seems to be the normal and necessary preliminary to the life in cities, it may be questioned whether the countryman living close to nature, but comparatively ignorant of books, may not be a more complete human creature than the dweller in cities. Art, poetry, song, story-telling and the drama, are instinctive activities which all came from the hearts of ordinary men long before scholars and professionals existed. Education and livelihood should not be widely sundered for vocation is the largest part of life. Work is a sacred thing and I have wished above all to stir the instinct for making and doing. Work is the great reality, beauty is the great aim. Full satisfaction is only to be found in the common beauty of common things of the common life.

II

DRUDGERY REDEEMED: BEAUTY IN COMMON THINGS

As a beginning I want to discuss the general idea of "Art" and I have put my own conclusion as a title. Of course I do not mean to exclude great and exceptional things but the common ones are the more necessary and little things are a basis for big things. By art I think we should mean all worthy human handicraft, from dairy work and ploughing to cathedral building. In some ways of looking at it, art may seem a subject remote from many or most of us, but I wish to argue those are mistaken ways and art properly understood, like poetry and religion, is near everyone of us. It is universal and for all, or it is of little worth and consequence.

Art is intelligence, interest and skill manifested in all we make and do and I believe that something of great value to everybody may be suggested by the *idea* of art. All right and reasonable work is a compound of body and soul. If work is without art it is mere toil, drudgery and slavery; skill, the sense of service and pride in the doing, will fill it with a new spirit. Art is drudgery made divine. We have to make beauty out of all that we do.

Our incessant daily grind ! How wonderful and desirable it would be, we sometimes think, to get rid of it once for all and do nothing ever after,

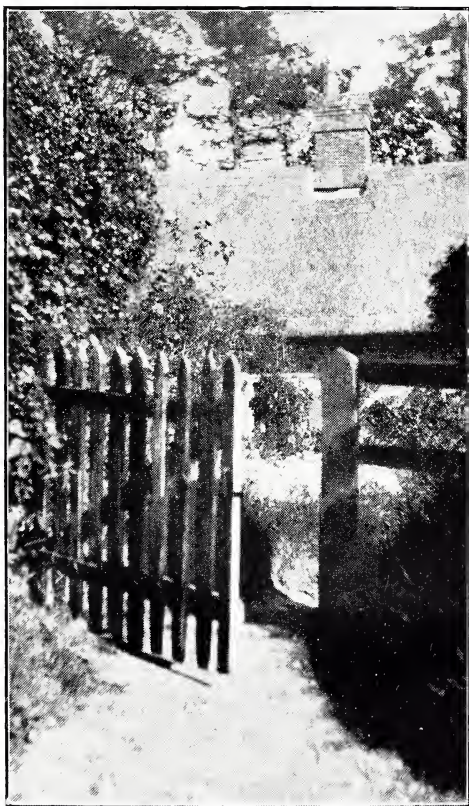


FIG. 5. *Cottage Gate.*

or at least do other things that were not imposed by stern necessity. But would it ? What else is there better worth doing than the things which are needed, serviceable and satisfying ? By the

study of actual works of art I have been drawn to the conclusion, already stated, that all sound handiwork is art, but for the purpose of this chapter I thought I would look up the history of the word. What I find in Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary* is this: "ART—skill, contrivance, method." There is not a word about the special modern associations of the word with oil-paintings and marble-sculpture, the Royal Academy, Exhibition Galleries and great "genius."

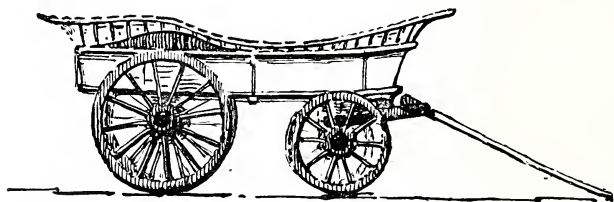


FIG. 6. *Oxfordshire Waggon* (drawn by Captain Kettlewell, R.N.).

Old, but not so very old, indentures of apprenticeship to the commonest callings, like those of the tailor or the tinker, call these "arts and occupations." Even our present word artisan was formerly arts-man, one who practised an art.

So much for the word. I should now like to give a few examples of beautiful common arts. First of all, I think of country cart-building, a craft in which the traditions of good workmanship and a spontaneously exercised sense of beauty are maintained without anybody thinking anything about it. Basket work is another common art, so is ordinary pottery making, but the old ways are now fast disappearing. A correspondent

sends me a photograph of "A jug and an old pie-dish, such as used to be found fifty years ago, white, lined with sky-blue glaze, quite a lovely thing. The jug is brown stone-ware. I bought it recently locally; there are several nice things in stone-ware still obtainable, which most kitchens possess." Cart-horse harness and local implement making are still quite good, it seems difficult to spoil things required by horses and in farm work. Field



FIG. 7. *Farm Buildings.*

gates are usually admirable, perfect indeed; we delight in them when out landscape sketching but most people pass them by as if they were made by a machine in Birmingham, rather than by an intelligent artist in the next village. Cottage-thatching, rick-making, gardening, all are arts essential to the beauty of our country. The ways of house-keeping, furnishing with honest useful things, putting blinds at the windows, cooking and bread-making, laying the table nicely, all are traditional arts. I have seen a hearth whitened in a farm kitchen with the same sort

of delight in skill as an accomplished painter takes in a successful piece of painting. We recognise a farm dairy or cottage kitchen as beautiful when presented to us in a picture but we find it difficult to see the beauty directly with our own eyes.

Fig. 8 is a sketch of a Northumbrian loaf of bread: I am told that the twist is not laid on the top only, but that the whole is twisted.

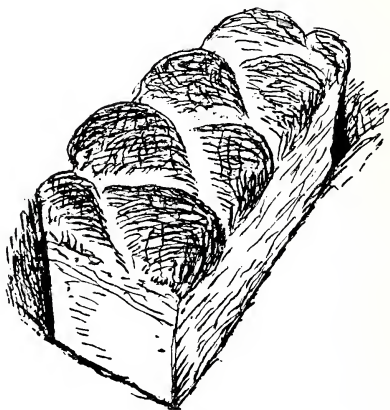


FIG. 8. *A Northumbrian Loaf.*

The old butter prints of the last generation were delightful examples of design and amazing examples of skill. My friend writes, "I was down where they are made the other day and photographed one of the last two men left—he will do you a tulip or a cow or wheat ears, just as you wish" (Figs. 9, 10, 11 and 12).

Gravestones, if such things may be mentioned in print, used to be beautiful, human and

touching, up to about 1850 when all personal thought seems to have vanished from even the inscriptions and they became bald and poor—just another form of manufacture.

Sewing, dressmaking, hat-trimming are all valuable forms of art, so is hand-writing, so in a word is any worthy thing done in a homely human way by ourselves or by our neighbours. Machine produced things are different, they lack

individuality and friendliness. Friendliness in things made and done : that is art.

We live in an age of great production in big cities, and by means of advertisement machine-made objects are being spread all over

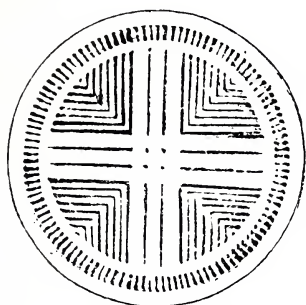


FIG. 9. *Butter Print.*



FIG. 10.



FIG. 11.

Butter Prints.



FIG. 12.

the country driving out the old local products. Furniture dealers go about the villages "picking up" old pieces of furniture, brass or crockery for their London shops. In such ways the character

of country things has been rapidly changed during the last two generations.

I should like to say over again the points on which I want the reader to take the trouble to think for one minute each.

1. The value of the notion of art in our own daily work: by accepting necessary toil and by

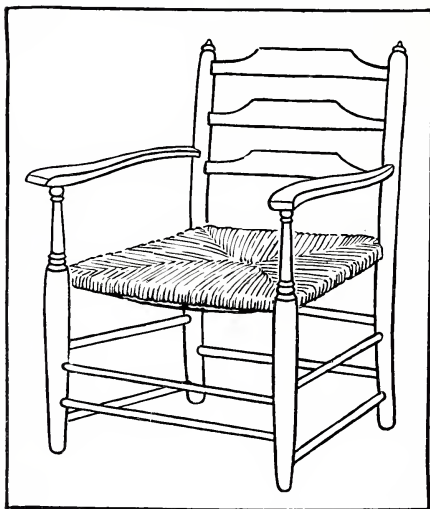


FIG. 13. *A Cottage Chair.*

(By kind permission of the Dryad Works.)

doing it in a "sportsman-like spirit" it may be redeemed from the curse and may even be raised to poetry and made divine.

2. We should be able to recognise simple works of art when we see them, for sympathy's sake and as an essential means

of keeping up good quality in ordinary things.

3. Country things have a character and beauty specially their own. It would be an infinite loss and pity if our villages became like inferior parts of London. It would be a great gain all round if we could become more *aware of the common beauty*.

III

DRAWING FOR EVERYONE

My purpose here is to suggest that drawing is a natural common aptitude; that to some extent everybody does actually draw in hand-writing; also that our national powers would be immensely increased if all realised that they could and did draw and if they exercised the faculty more confidently and commonly than they at present do.

It is not generally known, as scholars of antiquities know, that all writing was actually developed out of drawing. Drawing seems to be one of the primitive instinctive ways of communication, like speech and imitative actions, and far back in the life of man on the earth the art of drawing can be traced. It is often remarked that children seem in their early years to repeat in miniature the long course of race development, but I do not know if their instinctive tendency towards drawing has been mentioned as an illustration of this. Drawings of objects were "signs" for those things and the study of early forms of writing—Egyptian, Assyrian and Chinese—shows that the written signs were at first only very simplified pictures. Drawing is an instinctive primitive art; writing is more advanced, artificial and later.

Our writing to-day, yours and mine, is really drawing. We do not realise this because by practice we come to do it so spontaneously; but we all began by drawing the straights and

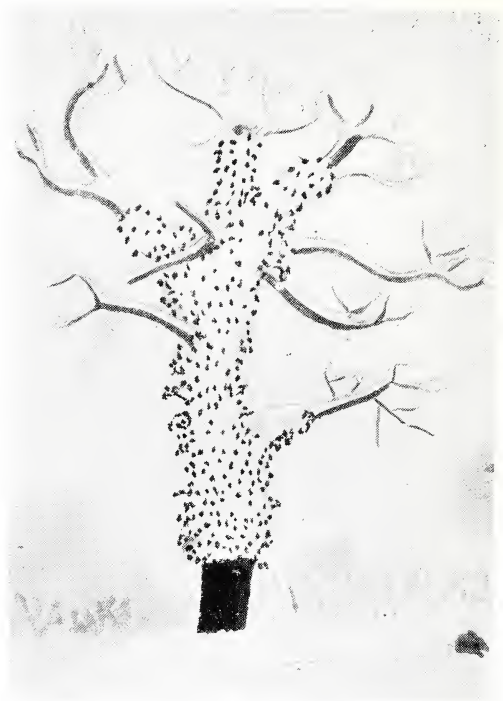


FIG. 14. *The Snow*, by Roger Peach.

curves and angles which make up writing and a large part of this learning was the acquiring of confidence and gaining control of our hand and pen. Control of hand, confidence and accurate observation, are the largest part of all drawing. Again, all of us in our own handwriting have

knowledge of a standard of reference for the observation of other shapes. So anyone feels confidence that he or she can copy pretty accurately the handwriting of other persons and to do this is quite an advanced drawing exercise. It is done by direct observation and imitation of forms.





Now this method may be readily extended by everyone to all sorts of drawing. A leaf, a flower, a face and everything else are made up of straights, angles and curves, just the forms of letters; and if we thought of drawing as a kind of advanced

FIG. 15. *Nasturtium*,
by a child of 10.

writing there is no reason at all why we should not "write" the forms of simple objects as well as of A B C D E etc. More complex forms are made up of many of such minor forms put together and the relation of these several parts can only be *seen* accurately by practice. A profile face for instance is made up of a long flat C-like form for the forehead, a line like a figure 6 for the nose, a bracket-like shape } for the lips and another little C for the chin; the back of the head is a big D.



FIG. 16. *Petunia*,
by a child of 10.

For very complicated forms like a tree it is necessary to see the big general form before being confused by the little details; looked at as a *whole* it will be seen that most trees approximate to  or  or  or  in general form. These are likely to lean a little to right or left and so on. Put down your impression of the big general forms first. The minor details are then fitted into the big shapes. Notice for yourself the approximate simplified form of the next tree you see. Drawing is just observing forms and "writing" them down.

One great fault of modern English education, it may be suggested, is a tendency to "lay out" every kind of essential human knowledge into a "subject" that takes ten years to begin to understand. English History for instance, has been so elaborated that very few people indeed can venture to feel that they know the great facts of our national story. I believe that the big things that matter could and should be told so shortly and vividly that every Englishman might be expected to know the history of his land. It is the same in regard to the stars, and learned people called "Astronomers" have so frightened the rest of us that we have had to draw back and say "it is too difficult." The once common art of drawing has suffered in the same way. Because it takes a dozen or a score of years of practice to draw like a "great artist," ordinary people are afraid to begin, although a competent and interesting demonstrator could teach a class of bright young people much that mattered in a week of evenings—say in six hours.

Doubtless it takes a sort of genius and much practice to ride a bicycle like a circus performer, but everybody can learn to ride well enough in a couple of afternoons. In visiting old buildings and ruins about England I have noticed on masonry the names and other scratchings some centuries old; these are never mere scribblings, but show a sense of design and a power of drawing and I have come to the conclusion that nearly

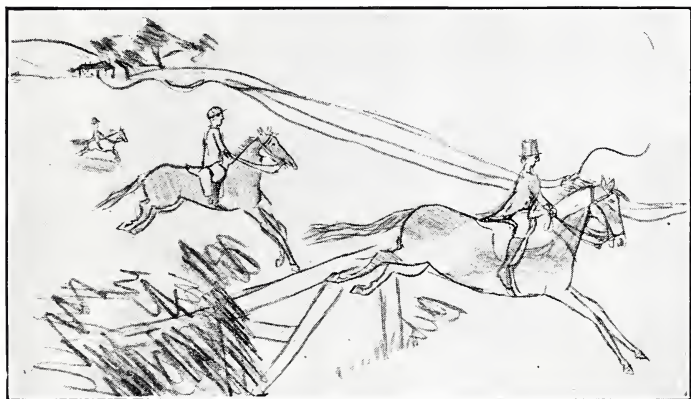


FIG. 17. *The Steeplechase*, drawn by Joan Lofting, aged 8½.

everyone in the middle ages drew “in a way” as a matter of course.

These suggestions are being written with the hope that they may be actually *useful* and have *results*. Yet I can scarcely think that any “grown up” person reading them will be moved to try to draw. “Whatever he may say, I know I couldn’t do it and I get on without it!” Well, I have a second line of suggestion, but I will waste one or two more words on the general

question. We must really as English people aim at recovering and extending our aptitudes, powers and means of expression and not be content with mere "getting along." The thought of "could not" is for the most part merely what the mind teachers call an inhibition, an unnecessary fear. Some measure of useful drawing is at least as easily attained as the ability to ride a bicycle or skill in a simple game. I should like indeed to try to make a game of it and then all would go smilingly. If these words should reach any worker in a craft who at present does just note down the shape of a thing I would say to him: "That's it, go ahead, do more, all the rest is practice; don't be shy; that's the same kind of drawing as Michael Angelo's, but not so advanced of course."

The other argument I have, may, I think, carry farther. I want all mothers and aunts and elder sisters to encourage the natural inclination that young children seem to have towards drawing. Show an interest in it, do not chill by unsympathetic "criticism," help to carry it forward. Just as young children draw quite spontaneously, if they have a pencil and paper, or chalk and a pavement, so for some mysterious reason they nearly all give up drawing at a later stage. I should like to find out just why they give it up and ever after fall back on saying, "No, I can't draw."

My supposition is that they actually come to understand that they are *expected* to give it up and they therefore do. Their elders and guardians have looked on this natural drawing—a real and remarkable power—as a childish game

having no relation to drawing proper as exercised by artists and academicians. Then they frighten the young people by saying that their angular



FIG. 18. *The Horse*, drawn by Joan Lofting, aged 8 $\frac{3}{4}$.

figures with twenty fingers and toes well spread out, are not like the fashion plates with their little gloved hands and pointed shoes, and they go on to speak of a difficult ("it's very difficult, you know") subject called perspective which

everybody who would draw properly must learn, and so on and on. At which talk of learning, the child mind quite naturally draws back and shuts up. Children could just as easily be taught *not* to speak, or *not* to write, as they now are taught *not* to draw. All that this early chill of faculty may imply I cannot measure. Even the people who make our "great artists" must suffer, I think, from "learning drawing" too much as a school subject, when it should be the complete opening out of their own individual natural aptitudes and all the rest of the people ever after try to carry on without a natural means of expression, explanation and observation.

I need not insist on the advantages of drawing in after life for purposes of expression and explanation, but the relation of observation to drawing is possibly not so obvious. Now drawing is not only *doing*, it is *seeing* first. Most drawing is the recording of observations and very much of keen and curious observation of the look of things must be lost to people who do not record what they see and by so doing, learn to look again and record better. I wonder indeed what people who do not draw can see. Please don't be offended, but they simply cannot see as one whose drawing reacts on his sight sees. Drawing is thus not merely useful, it is also cultural. This question of seeing power may be illustrated again by writing. We can all write and when I show a piece of writing to anyone I am confident they see it as I do; but if I show the same to a savage, an infant or the cat, what do they really see? Knowledge

and the power to see accurately evidently go together.

I will say over again the points I wish to make particularly clear.

1. Drawing is a natural instinct, not an artificial accomplishment.

2. It is an aptitude or method of communication akin to writing and speech; everybody in modern society ought to draw and would draw if it were expected that they would.

3. Children should be helped in their attempts to draw and they should be encouraged to carry the drawing on past the awkward corner where at present most throw it over with their dolls as being childish.

4. Everyone who writes does in fact draw already and drawing can easily be developed from the basis of writing.

5. Writing itself is an art and the old idea of wanting to write beautifully should be brought back.

IV

DESIGNING AS A GAME

IN the talk on Drawing, I said that children should not be frightened off by telling them of its difficulties, but that it should be taught as a game. This is equally true—indeed more obviously true—of ornamental designing. Games themselves are really so interesting because they are all various forms of designing, that is of re-arrangement, adjustment, experiment. Cards or draughts would be dull occupations if the player had to repeat one sequence of moves, or to buy a few pattern games from a “fancy shop,” and if design were eliminated. Most generally “design” may be understood to mean arranging how work is to be done. Of course some work—like organ-building and watch-making for example—is very technical and can only be arranged or designed by people who are highly trained in the special craft. In many other customary things, however, like laying the breakfast table, making a pudding or trimming a hat, the design is thrown in with the work and nobody says anything about it. All work or “art” design arose like that, the designing was done by the workers in going along. So it is with a few things even to-day when so much designing has been isolated into special businesses. The country waggon

builder and gate-maker do not want a fussy architect from London to tell them how to do their own work, and they do it so well that they would modestly smile a denial if I tried to tell them what fine designers I think them to be—the real thing in fact.

The arranging or designing part in all kinds of work must be a delightful exercise of skill to all who know the rules. We see it at once of the angler for example, but it must be equally possible to the ploughman and rick-thatcher. Besides the arranging how structural work is to be done, there is a large amount of designing of a general and ornamental kind, like the lay-out of a garden, the finishing of a dress and the invention of patterns. This kind of designing should be a game for everybody for it applies to all kinds of work whatever.

I may describe pattern design as the arrangement of spots, spaces, lines and other simple elements in an orderly way. Even that looks frightening in print, but I mean something which is very easy, in fact more than easy, delightful, a game. I spoke above of laying the breakfast table as involving design—nicely done it may stand as an example of a spot pattern; patchwork quilts—nice old things—are examples of space patterns; herring-boning in sewing is a line pattern.

Take a lot of coins, say pennies or pennies and shillings, and try in how many orderly arrangements you can lay them out. Then consider that the spot need not be a circle, it might be a “diamond” or a leaf or a sprig or something

quite elaborate. After I had finished my last chapter in which I spoke of children drawing on pavements, I went out one morning and found within about a hundred yards of my door two nice little drawings of tulips of which I made a

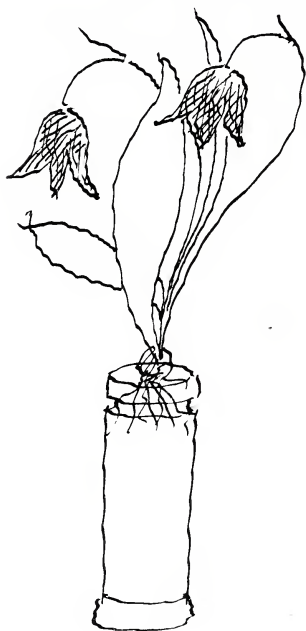


FIG. 19.

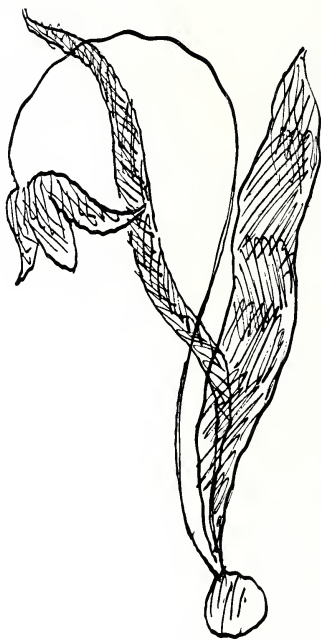


FIG. 20.

sketch to show you (Figs. 19 and 20). Such little "elements" as these spotted over a fabric, either all of one kind, or both alternately, would make a delightful embroidery pattern. The sprigs without the pot might be turned in several directions thus producing other variations.

Another time, with a packet of cards, find out the different pattern arrangements you can make of them, backs and fronts alternately perhaps. One can see at once there may be arrangements in rows like bricks, or half of them may be placed "upright" and half lengthwise. Again they may be placed diagonally or some slanting and some straight. A chess board is a simple example of such a pattern made of squares instead of oblongs and an infinite number of different space-patterns of this kind may be made by altering the boundaries of the spaces—borrowing a piece from the next square on one or two sides and giving up as much on the other side or sides. Just try and see how amusing it is to do.

Again, take a boxfull of matches and experiment with the arrangements that can be made with them in forming squares, diamonds, herring-bone and more elaborate fret-patterns. Exploring what may be done in these ways is *pattern-designing*, and once set going—that is the difficulty—I think it should be quite as amusing as draughts or chess. With a very little thought and ingenuity "card games" of shapes in nice bright colours might be devised which could not fail to amuse both children and grown-ups. The "Snap" and "Happy Family" kind of game in Germany has, I believe, been expanded over more useful fields of knowledge than the relations of Mr. Grits and Dr. Dose. In the amusing autobiography of Lord F. Hamilton he tells how in his family the children learnt many things by the "Happy Family" method and it is easy to see how, if we cared not to waste

ourselves, much history, poetry, geography, astronomy and designing skill might be unconsciously picked up in this way.

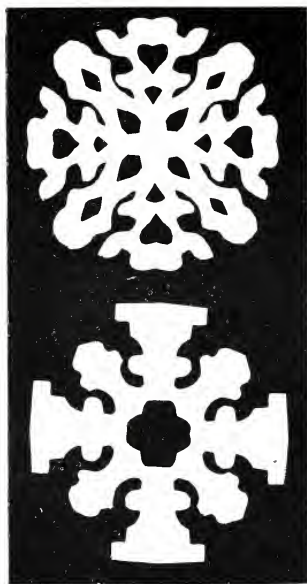


FIG. 21.

paper can "draw" very well with scissors. For four-way patterns take thin paper and fold once, then across, and again diagonally, till the form of V is reached, then cut in boldly yet with little turns and see what comes of it. Fig. 21 gives two just done, not very good, but they show what I mean. An endless number of rosette and

Designing arrangements or patterns might, I am sure, be carried far as a card game; then it should drift into a pencil and paper game; and then into a doing-our-work-better game—the best of all amusements. Work has become so dull, drab and dreary just because the designing game has gone out of it.

Another good form of the designing game is paper cutting; many people who are afraid of their life of pencil and



FIG. 22.

cross forms valuable for embroidery and all sorts of things may be obtained in this way. If the country tomb-stone maker would invent crosses in the same way for incising on slabs, that now very dreary business might be half reformed—the other half would be to get people to write

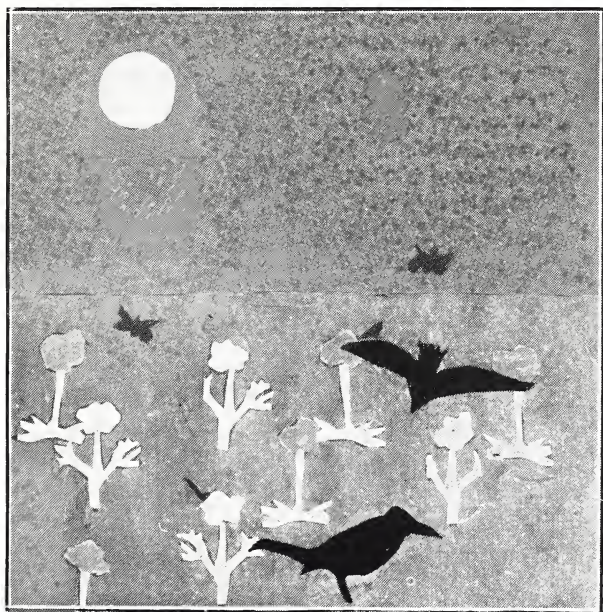


FIG. 23. *Design of Coloured Papers stuck down, by Helen Peach.*

inscriptions which said something human and to have them lettered in an amateur way instead of, as Hudson said, “like an auctioneer’s advertisement on a barn door.” This “art,” about which I am trying to talk, is human expression, natural skill and feeling, a sort of poetry; not manufactured dreariness obtained at a shop

for five pounds down. In Fig. 22 I have turned one of the cut paper rosettes into an embroidery pattern.

Fig. 23 is from a more elaborate design made up of sprigs and birds cut out in coloured paper and gummed down on a background. This was done for fun by Helen Peach, a big little girl twelve years old.

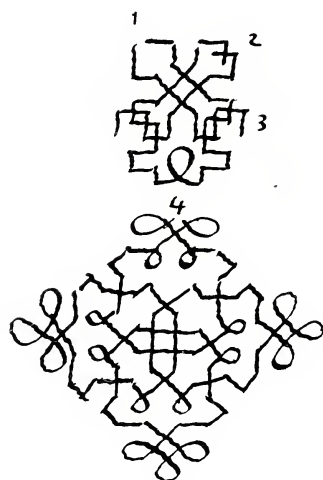


FIG. 24.

Playing with lines is quite a pleasant game with a pencil. Begin as A, B, C, in Fig 24 by four lines crossing one another—then add a *little bit* to the end of each line *uniformly* as at 1, then add a bit more to all four lines as at 2, then more as at 3, and finally close up all the sides as at 4. The bottom one is a complete result except that there is one little mistake. Such braiding patterns should be very useful to

embroiderers and dressmakers; they must be done in the play spirit.

Knot work is another common form of patterning. Take a piece of string and make chain stitch of it, also plait two or three cords together; now notice what pretty patterns these are. In Fig. 25 I played with a piece of cord until the knot A

“came” and then it was adapted into the cross form B.

Nearly anything will do from which to grow a pattern or design. Take the letters and forgetting that they spell, look on them only as shapes. By mere repetition they may be turned into pattern elements with which the designing game may be played :

C C C C C C C C
H H H H H H H H
N N N N N N N N
S S S S S S S S
D D D D D D D D
f f f f f f f f

In Fig 26 I begin with some letter forms but play with them a little by turning them about, then I take the last two to experi-

ment with further. I put down the separate S forms as on the right-hand side: then this suggests that the lines should be linked together as on the left. Again with the E element, make an all-over arrangement as on the right (one little mistake again !), now try linking up these, and make further additions; all the simplest child's play. A pattern comes out of it which I never saw before and yet on the other hand it looks quite Chinese.

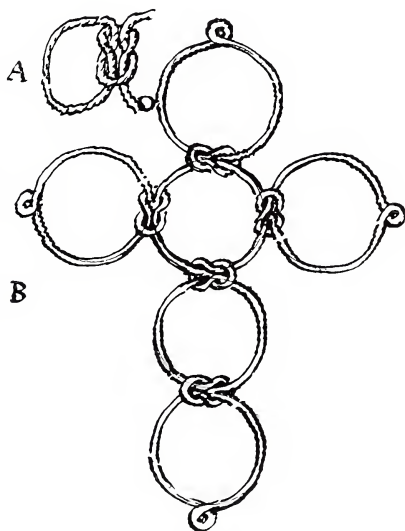


FIG. 25.

As these designs made themselves by playing the game and I had no part in it beyond holding the pencil, it may be said that they are quite pretty in their way—they would make excellent quilting patterns.

VVVVVA ZZZZZZ
 LTTLTTL MWMWM
 EEHEEHEE SSSSSS

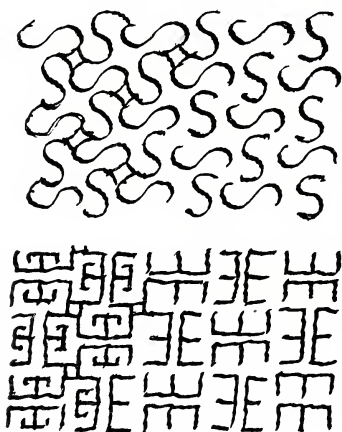


FIG. 26.

I end with one or two designs from nature which have been lent to me by kind young people. The birds in the bush are little more than a nature drawing but just that little—the arrangement and evenness of distribution—turns it into a design. I should like a room painted all over like that (Fig. 27). Fig. 28

is one from a set of cards of the alphabet.

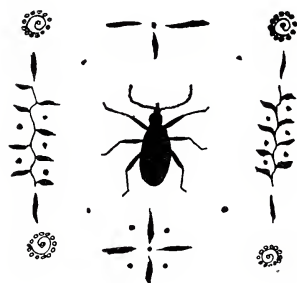
The designing I have spoken of might be tried over by anyone in a few hours. The point I want to make especially plain is that all ornamental designing arises by such experiment as I have tried to describe or it is suggested in the course of work by the ways in which things are done like pinching and pressing spoon patterns in piecrust or again it comes from observation of nature (Fig. 27). It does not require genius or any special gifts, it only needs practice like any other game. I believe all young people should be led through



FIG. 27. *Birds in a bush, from a water colour drawing by Helen Peach.*

some such course as here suggested for it introduces in a simple way the idea of experiment, exploration and seeing what can be done under certain conditions. Every pattern found out in this way is a little INVENTION.

One of the main purposes of these chapters has been to urge the view that everybody who does



Bwasa Beetle. 

FIG. 28. *By Roger Peach.*

good handiwork is a true artist and an original designer. A final word may be said on that difficult question "originality." Originality properly comes by doing work naturally and making adaptations to fit various needs. Miss Bosanquet, in describing some excellent millinery made at a Women's Institute, remarked in

a letter: "It is delightful to find that when a dozen people start to make a hat from the same design, possibly an old one taken to pieces, the result is that each hat is quite different, being varied by the taste of the maker to suit the wearer."

Quite so, all work done in a free human way involves that mysterious, that simplest thing "original design," adventure, amusement, contentment.

V

SEWING ARTS

ONE of the thoughts that I am anxious to get expressed and understood is this—*It is the common things that matter most.* Of several reasons which might be given for this, I will pick out two. Our lives are mainly concerned with the common things and the world is really carried on by them. Secondly, the few great exceptional things grow out of the many widespread little ones. Thirdly, (I must give one more) somehow it is the common things which are *poetic*—a man cutting spring grass, a little maid driving the cows back, a fisher-boy bailing out a boat; these are the stuff of poetry. Merely saying the words makes a difference; compare these little word pictures with saying: “I saw a millionaire in a motor making a mile a minute.”

On the second point I cannot too strongly insist. We have been led away to think so much about “genius” and “great performers” that we have gone far towards drying up the fresh wells from which even the more specialised “fine arts” flow. Take music, for instance. In the times of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, the English were a singing people and consequently great music was often produced. If ever we are to have great music again it must flow from the hearts of the

people. Professionals are of no avail without the people. In a similar way Shakespeare was no unrelated prodigy without poetic father or mother. The truth is—as looking at old tomb inscriptions first showed me—everybody in Shakespeare's time was writing verses and amusing himself with making up little sayings. Shakespeare was the best of his time but without many others the best would not have been considerable. From one point of view he was an individual "genius," but from another he is the representative man of an age. Make the others and the best one will be made by them.

I wish to speak here about : (1) Plain sewing as an art ; (2) Patchwork as design ; (3) Samplers as pattern sheets ; (4) Simple embroidery as amusement ; (5) Quilt-making as household tradition ; (6) Lace-making as an industry.

Sewing and weaving are great foundational arts, they have had simply infinite effect on our development. In ancient times weaving was the most typical art of the peoples. It seems to have been called by a word which we preserve in textile and texture, technical and architect. Patterns were first developed in woven stuffs.

I wish I knew enough of *Plain Sewing* to praise adequately all the delightful mysteries of hemming, running, darning and the rest. These are the roots of all cunning needlework. From the Dictionary it seems that "broider" meant the same as border. At first embroidery was giving a little extra finish around the edges. Even the wonderful art of lace-making is a development of darning.

Patchwork has fallen into undeserved contempt, the system of joining up patches of different colours is common to many arts. In needlework it was spoilt for a time by being narrowed down to the "box-pattern," which became tiresome after it had been done more than once. Devising fresh shapes fit for joining together is an excellent introduction to pattern designing.*




FIG. 29.

We now for the most part misunderstand the purpose and meaning of *Samplers*: they are not properly innocent little trifles done to keep children quiet, they were made as records of stitches, forms, letters, patterns of borders, sprigs etc. for use in actual work. All sewing learning ought to include the working of a sampler.

Embroidery, as said above, is only needlework by another name, but this new name has brought in a puzzling element and often a false note: the long word "architecture" has injured the broader old

* Compare Chapter IV.

word "building" in a similar way. Much pretty work might be done by mere extension of plain sewing. Two or three lines of herring-bone, for instance, would make quite a nice border. Or lines of stitching might be waved in their course . It would be good for girls' minds to be led into making little variations of this sort rather than always "teaching" them fixed names for fixed things without ever asking who settled them. Quite young children generally take to simple ornamental work with delight. Fig. 29 contains rough sketches from some little works kindly sent to me from a school at Leicester. Miss Ward, the teacher, says that a cosy and mat from which most of the details came, were done by a girl from her own designs, with only the aid of a few teaching stitches. Good work of this sort is often done "by very backward girls who are dull at ordinary school subjects." That is something we have not sufficiently realised. Too much book may turn some kind of children into dull dunces. Making things opens out minds.

"Marking" with initial letters is obviously "embroidery" in cross-stitch, and introduces a general method. Embroidery need not be in many or any colours: white on white work may be very beautiful. I should like to see the semi-old-fashioned button hole open-work, so popular sixty years ago, brought back. Curiously that seems to have been always in white, I suppose to be "fast" in washing. Knitting, crochet, tatting, all seem to me delightful methods of work. The old bold blanket stars which I suppose were

primarily identification marks (Fig. 30) seem to have entirely "gone out." Smocking has also practically disappeared.

Quilting opens up another field of embroidery. There is no reason why quilting-like patterns should be reserved only for quilts. Net or shell

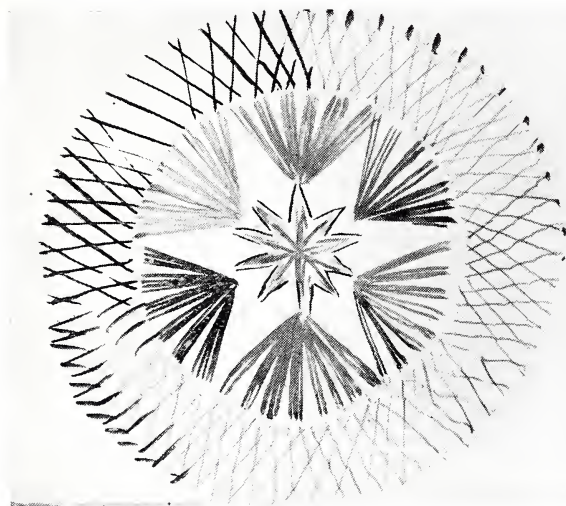


FIG. 30. A "Blanket Star": 14 inches big.

patterns are excellent for many kinds of all-over work. Divide up any space with lines stitched over and that alone is embroidery. Add little branches to the lines, or a simple dot or sprig in each space and there you are!

The making of quilts has never so completely disappeared from country homes as other forms of embroidery and in some districts a fine tradition of quilting is still maintained.

In her book on "Needlework," Mrs. Elizabeth Glaister says of quilt-making : " Perhaps no piece of needlework gave our ancestors more satisfaction, both in the making and when made, than the quilt. We have seen a good many specimens of real quilted counterpanes, in which several thicknesses of material were stitched together into a solid covering and the lighter silken or linen coverlets ornamented with all sorts of

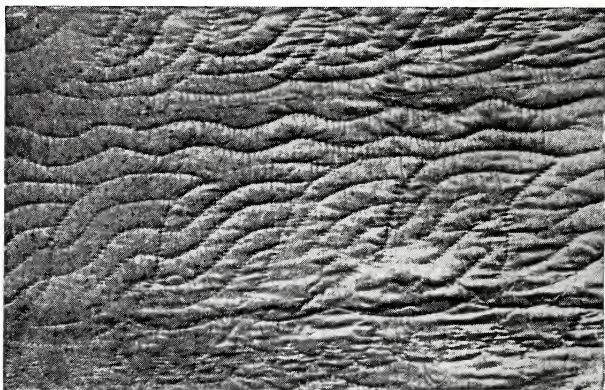


FIG. 31.

embroidery. Cradle-quilts were also favourite pieces of needlework and figure in inventories of Henry VIII.'s time. The seventeenth century was a great time for them ; the quilting of some is made by sewing several strands of thick cotton between the fine linen of the surface and the lining. When one line was completed the cotton was laid down again next to it and another line formed. A sort of shell pattern was a favourite for quilting. When sufficient space was covered with

the ground pattern, flowers or other ornaments were embroidered on this excellent foundation."

By the helpful intervention of Mrs. Nugent Harris I have received an account of present-day quilt-making in Yorkshire. It gives me much pleasure even to know that such nice and useful work (that is it!) is still being done. With the description were some photographs, Figs. 31, 32 and 33. Fig. 34 is from a

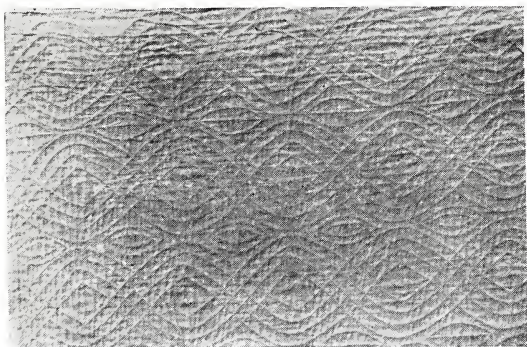


FIG. 32.

drawing of an elaborate example. Some full-size pattern pieces for setting out the lines were also lent to me. These were of brown paper, cut out by scissors and of considerable size. I give in Fig. 35 some rough sketches from these pattern elements, they varied from say six to ten inches, the border piece at the bottom being much more. What is said below about marking out patterns with the help of wine glasses and plates is most pleasant to hear: that is how reasonable work should be done.

I now give the local quilter's description.

"The quilts made in this district are of two thicknesses, silk, sateen or linen with cotton-wool between. The stitching is done through all so as to make the pattern on both sides. The photos I enclose, Figs. 31, 32 and 33, are what you would term the old national patterns of quilting. They are done by the old ladies in the villages of

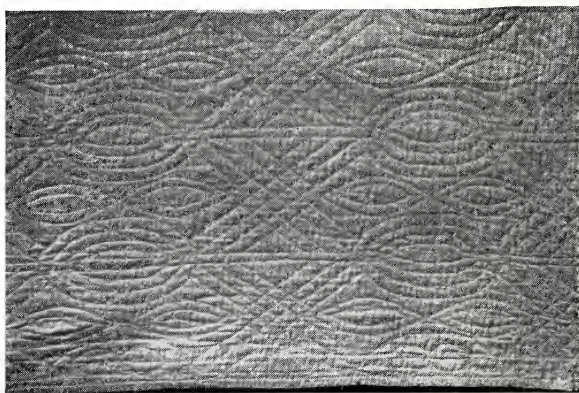


FIG. 33.

Yorkshire, who with little or no knowledge of geometrical designs use what they have at hand, such as wine glasses, delf plates, oval trays etc."

"Fig. 36 is a very fine specimen of an embroidered quilt, it is made of two thicknesses of hand-made linen, with a ply of other material between, quilted one inch apart diagonally on the under-side, top-side embroidered. The needlework and colouring are both wonderfully fine. The quilt is very old and one of the finest samples of work obtainable."

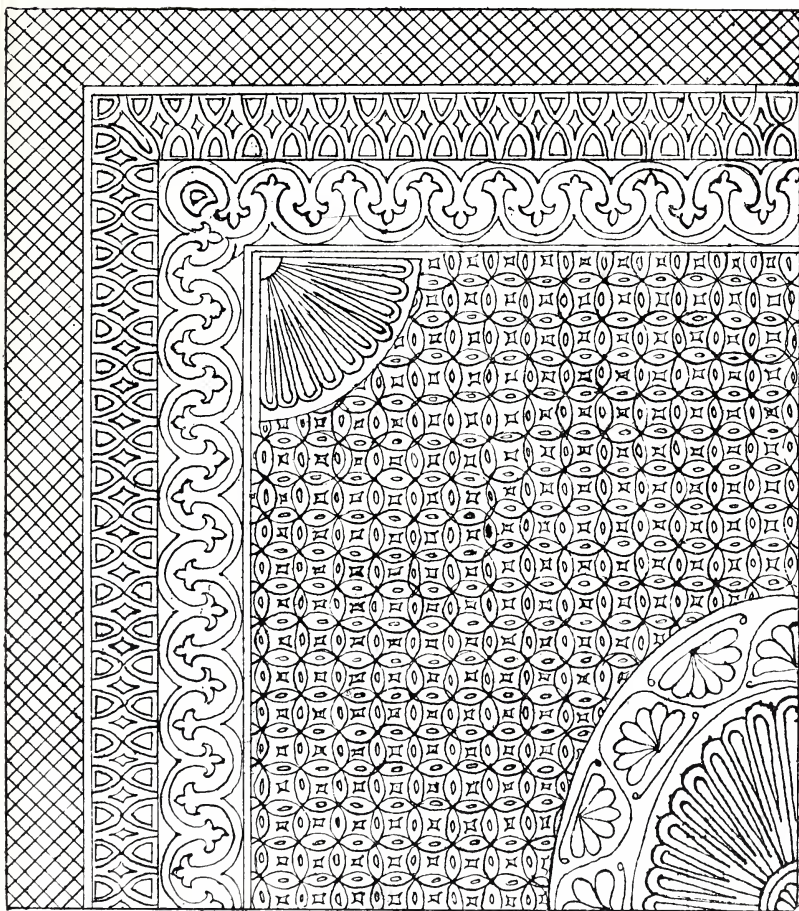


FIG. 34.

“ Fig. 34 is a quilt designed by Mrs. Murdoch, member of Wykeham Women’s Institute and will illustrate what can be done. The centre is formed of overlapping circles, using a three inch wine glass. When setting out a quilt with a design as

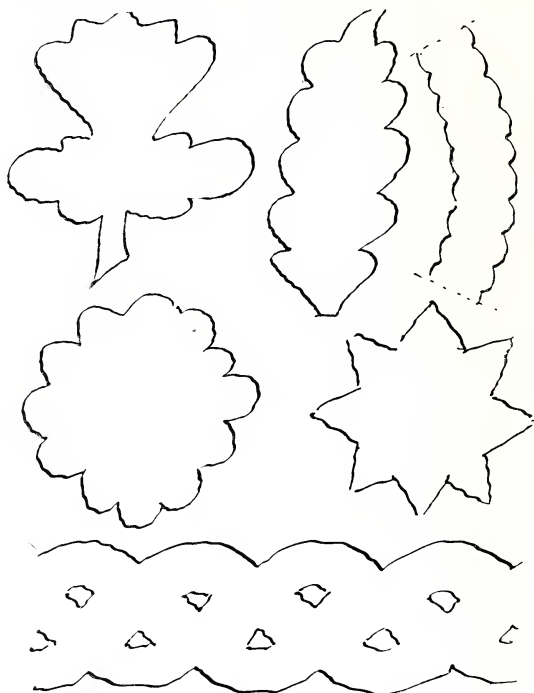


FIG. 35. *Patterns, see p. 51.*

in Fig. 34, after the material has been tacked together with the cotton-wool between, it is best to spread it out on a board or table and chalk in the straight lines of the border and centre piece. Care has to be taken that the

pattern of the border works out correctly at the angles."

In the Museum at St. Albans is a fragment of a very beautiful quilt of continually changing details in yellow silk on a white ground.

That a similar custom of home quilt-making has been maintained in America up to the present day—or night!—is shown by Miss Webster's "Quilts: Their Story and how to make them" (Batsford, 1915). Many of the illustrations are very like the Yorkshire examples and doubtless much of the American tradition was carried over by the Pilgrim Fathers or Mothers. Quilt-making in England deserves a similar record. The American authoress says:

"In its suitability for manufacture (properly hand-making) within the home the quilt possesses a peculiar merit. Although exposed for a full century to the competition of machinery, under the depressing influence of which most of the fireside crafts have all but vanished" (Hear, hear!) "the making of quilts as a home industry has never languished. Its hold on the affections of womenkind has never been stronger than it is to-day. There are more quilts being made at the present time than ever before and their construction as a household occupation and recreation is steadily increasing in popularity. This should be a source of satisfaction to all who believe that the source of our nation's strength lies in keeping the hearth flame bright" (good phrase that!). "The quilt is the result of patchwork and quilting; patching provides a field for artistic ability while quilting calls for greater skill in handling the

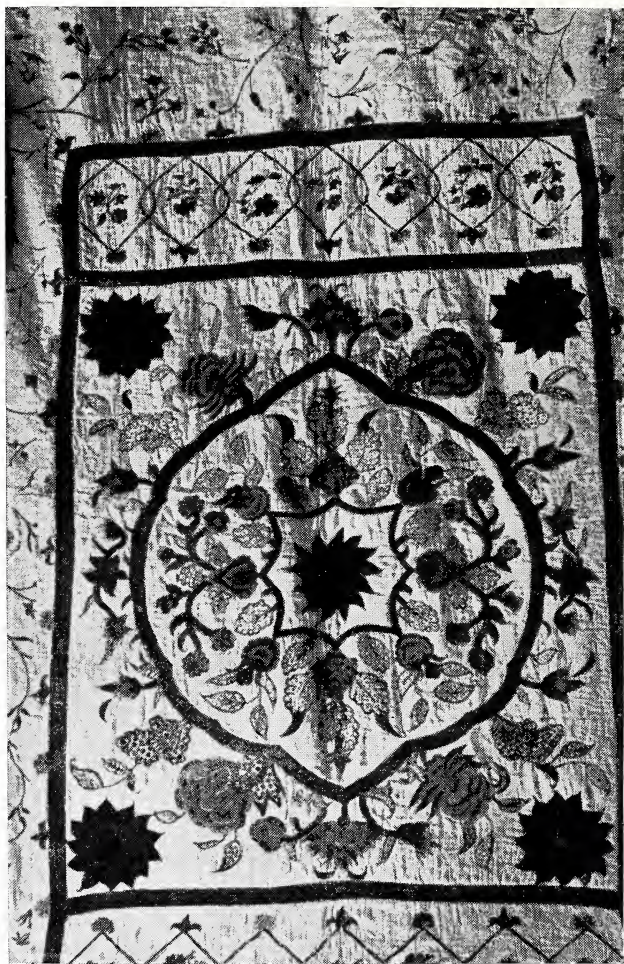


FIG. 36. *Embroidered quilt, see p. 52.*

needle. To our Grandmothers quilt-making meant social pleasure as well as necessary toil." The quilt patterns in America received or retained distinctive names, such as : Five pointed Star, Tree of Paradise, Puss in the Corner, Mexican Rose, Pilgrim's Pride, Garden of Eden, Golden Gates, Jacob's Ladder, Joseph's Coat, Solomon's Crown, Rising Sun, Stars upon Stars. "Quilting Bees" were a form of social diversion. Patch-work patterns also had names such as Chariot Wheel. I wonder if like names are known in England.

Lace-making was developed as a method of sewing on open-work grounds and I want to say a few words on English Lace-making.

Every woman in "my time" seems to have been born with some knowledge of lace, "That is Valenciennes, that Mechlin and that is Brussels," they would say. What had nearly faded out of their minds, except perhaps for some knowledge of Honiton lace, was the fact that we had English laces of the same kind. However, I felt in my young bones that even Honiton lace was thought not to be quite the real thing. Now in my old bones I know that Honiton and Buckinghamshire and the rest of the British-made laces are super-right because they are our own. A fact that needs thinking over is that "fashions" nearly always lead to a preference for foreign things which in some false way seem to be "grander" than our own. It is a long and dreary tale how our own home arts have always been scorned and betrayed by "superior people" anxious to exhibit their knowledge of foreign things.

The story of English lace-making is quite tragic. The art of making lace on a pillow was brought into the country soon after its invention and it had expanded to a considerable industry by the middle of the eighteenth century. It was called "bone lace" from the pretty sticks on which the threads were wound. This was not merely an amateur home-art it became an important national occupation. The lace-making of Devonshire, Ireland and the South-East English counties, which is still traditionally carried on in a humble and struggling way, is really—and I wish I could make this clear—one of the important evidences of our having entered into the culture of Europe by doing things for ourselves, instead of just demanding them for money. That delicately beautiful works of art should be produced in cottage homes is a form of national culture that appeals to some minds more than heaped up diamonds and pearls. Art is not merely a product, it is a doing. *It is the doing that counts.*

Women who made lace may have starved and gone blind, but they must have known that they were artists and that is something. In a nice old "Tour through Great Britain" (1753) which I have before me I find the following account of Aylesbury and its neighbourhood. "Many of the poor here are employed in making lace for edgings, much inferior to those of Flanders; but it is some pleasure to us to observe that the English are not the only nation which admires foreign manufactures above its own, since the French sell the finest laces at Paris under the name of English laces.

English ladies are even with them in refusing to buy rich silks if they are not called French, though the looms of Spitalfields outdo any in France." The looms of Spitalfields themselves have now been sacrificed to the preference for foreign things as being "grander." The same writer, Defoe I believe, says of Great Marlow that "The trade of the town is chiefly in Bone-lace"; of Stony Stratford, "The principal manufacture—as well in the neighbourhood as in the town—is Bone-lace"; and again, "Olney is a pretty good town, where also is carried on a considerable manufacture of Bone-lace." As lately as 1860 Murray's guide speaks of High Wycombe as a centre of lace-making.

About five years ago I stayed for some time in the country near High Wycombe and it was then that I was drawn into some little understanding and much admiration of English lace-making as it still exists in these days of London shopping in Department Stores. In such vast places as these shops, spending money is all made very easy and attractive, but the things one really buys in them are : costs of transport, of enormous shop-rents, of at least six middlemen's profits, and only last of all what are called the "goods" !

I take a note from my Diary :

July 22nd, 1918. A lady here (Buckinghamshire) told me that when she was a child, say fifty years ago, "Everybody at Parmoor made lace. There was a school in the village where an old woman taught about twenty little lace-makers in a cottage. Lace-making became very badly

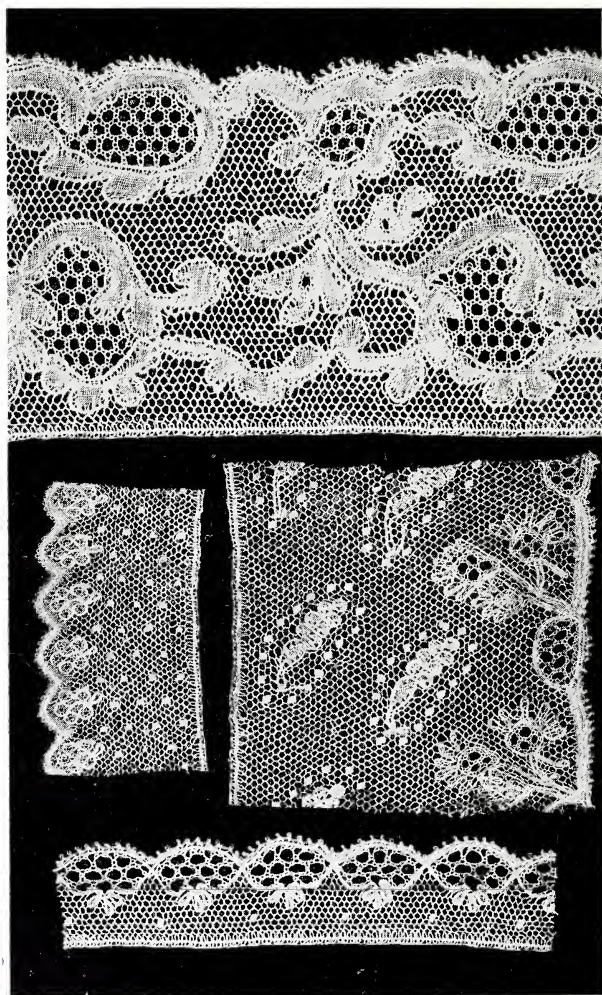


FIG. 37.

paid," in competition with another thing of the same name made by steam. "Here at —— there are still two or three older women who are fully skilled and some younger ones partially so. Skilful

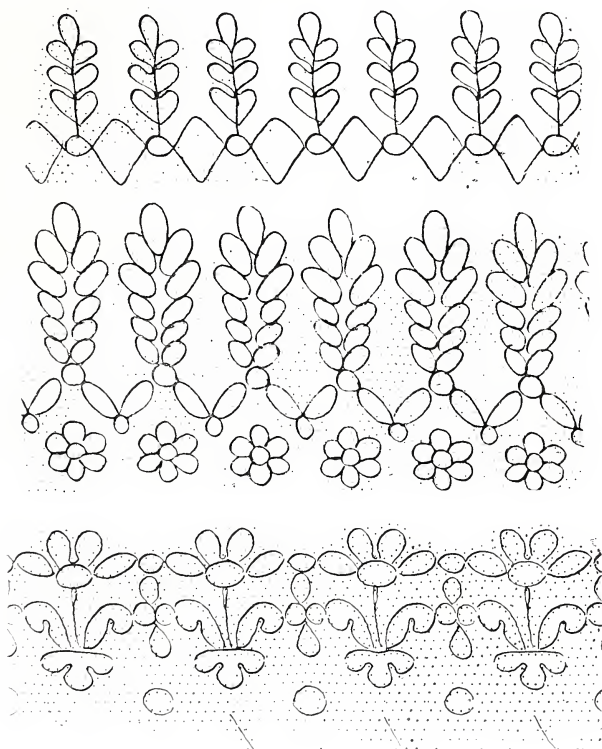


FIG. 38.

workers can manage the bobbins with the left hand, leaving the right free to move the pins." Another lady, who had made brave efforts to preserve the art, showed me her collections—all delightful and many exquisite specimens—and she took me

to a house to see a piece being made by Mrs. Ward who told me that she had been making lace for seventy years having begun when four years old. "We were taught in a cottage by an old lady. We read a chapter first and sometimes there was some singing while we worked. The most advanced sat in front and the beginners behind. To learn properly you must begin young." Many of the patterns were exactly right for the purpose and several seemed traditional, one called "Queen Elizabeth" might have come down from near her age. "A flounce made by Mrs. Carr, who is still living, but an invalid, took her two years and a half to do and required more than 900 bobbins. Yes, she just did it in the kitchen." A comparatively simple edging which I saw in progress was worked by forty or fifty bobbins. These were old, of box-wood and horn. Some beautiful edgings in a book of specimens were marked 15, 18, 21 pence a yard. It is difficult to see how the hard-hearted machine can do it for less.

Through the wonderful goodwill of the Women's Institutes the Editor of *Home and Country* obtained for me a collection of lace specimens and a big bundle of old patterns. The former, "all old Bucks. lace" was lent by Miss E. Johnson, Lane End, Buckinghamshire, and the Fig. 37, represents a few fragments. Other patterns lent by Mrs. E. Griffin, of West Malling, Kent, are hand-drawn and pricked out for the pins, Fig. 38. They seem to have been made and used at High Wycombe and probably date from about 1820 to 1860.

One of my objects in writing this little account of lace-making is to beg the Women's Institutes to think and think again, what may best be done to save this beautiful "women's art" from disappearing. If anything is to be done it must be at once. Why don't members of Parliament ever hear of such really important things?

VI

SEEING LONDON

WHEN asked to write on what there is for visitors from the country to see in London I objected that visiting London would hardly count as a Home Art and that I thought sitting on a gate in the country much nicer. However, I am going to pretend that just a visit to London and going back better pleased than ever with home may be a Home and Country Art. So I write on the understanding that the country is best for keeps. After all it is certain that some knowledge of the big world and its history is desirable for everybody who is engaged in the art of living, and seeing London may be an excellent introduction to English History.

To begin with I should like you to have preliminary notions of the situation and antiquity of London. Imagine the Thames, a big river with a strong tide and on the bank of this river a little fishing hamlet. London, like Liverpool, was first of all a sea-port, but it has grown so big that we hardly think of that until London Docks are mentioned or visited. Two thousand years ago this riverside village was occupied by a British people now represented by the Welsh and Cornish and it was already called by a name from which London is derived. Please "see" in your

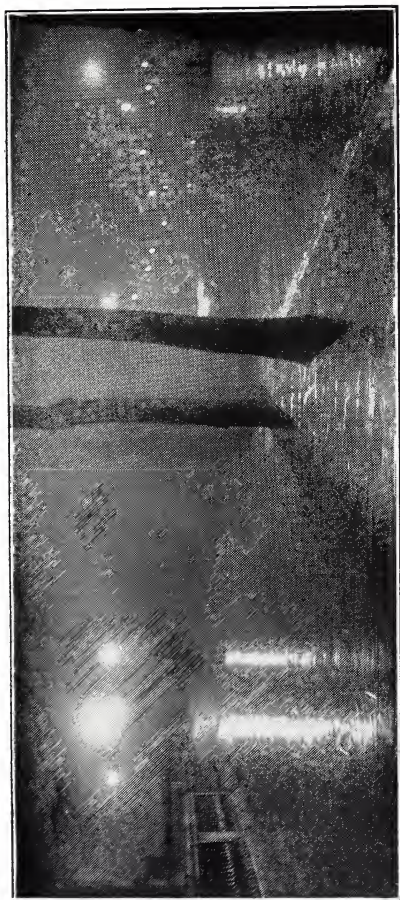


FIG. 39. *Thames Embankment, a wet night.*

(From a photograph by A. G. Cooke.)

mind a cluster of little huts—round like corn-stacks—by the river and some small rough ships drawn up on the banks of a creek. Then the Romans conquered the country and took possession of London about the year 50 A.D. At this time they ruled from Palestine in the East to Britain in the West. It was they who made London into a city proper of big, handsome buildings, with strong walls all round it and with a bridge across the river. London remained a Roman city for nearly 400 years and during this time Christianity was taught and the first churches were built. In the fifth century the heathen English and Saxons came over the seas and the Romans withdrew. Anyone who will firmly learn and “take in” the approximate dates of three periods will possess the key to much English History.

Roman Period, A.D. 50 to 450 (four centuries).
Saxon Period, A.D. 450 to 1050 (six centuries).
Norman invasion and Middle Ages, A.D. 1050 to 1550 (five centuries).

We want a very little book which will tell the great things in English History so strongly, quickly and movingly, that everybody will know the tale—their own story—as they used to know Bible stories.

I wish that amongst the many good works which are being done by the Women's Institutes the members would consider the desirability of getting a story of Britain written which would be so short, clear and vivid, that people would get to know it “by heart.” Until we know things so we don't really know them at all. Proper education is giving people things for

their "hearts" and no heart is properly furnished without such a national story.

Now I will suppose you are prepared to begin your sight seeing. From the hundreds of places and things I can only here separate out four principal groups which might conveniently be seen together if time allows. These groups are : The City, Trafalgar Square and neighbourhood, Westminster, South Kensington.

I. We will take the City as the first centre. That part of greater London which is to-day the "City" is the part which was surrounded by the great wall built by the Romans in the fourth century. Parts of this wall, about eight feet thick, still exist here and there: and the names Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Bishopsgate and Aldgate signify streets which led to actual big gate-towers in the City wall. This ancient City had only one bridge which is represented to-day by London Bridge. The Roman city, on ground no larger than that occupied by many big straggling villages to-day, shut in by its ring of wall, with little quays along the river front and with one long narrow bridge across the strongly flowing tides of the Thames, may be imagined more or less clearly by anyone who reads these words.

The first church on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral was built about the year 600 A.D. Then in the middle ages, a vast church with a very tall spire, something like Salisbury Cathedral, was erected. This was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, another date which is easy to remember.

The Present St. Paul's Cathedral was rebuilt



FIG. 40. *St. Paul's Cathedral.*

By kind permission of Photochrom Co. Graphic Works, Tunbridge Wells.

after the Fire together with most of the other City churches by Sir Christopher Wren who died exactly two centuries ago. This great building, which, however, is not so long as the earlier church, should be visited by everyone who can. It is the most typical and representative building in London. The dome as seen from inside must seem marvellous to anyone. Half-way down the nave is the fine monument of the Duke of Wellington.

The building of next importance in the City is the Tower of London which marks its Eastern limit. The Tower is called from the central building or "keep" of what is really the Castle of London. This castle was founded by William the Conqueror on his taking possession of London after the Battle of Hastings in 1066. To see over the Tower takes a long time but there are many things of great historical importance there.

The Guildhall is the ancient Town Hall of London. The great hall is open to visitors and in the crypt is an interesting exhibition of antiquities (many Roman) found in London. The Guildhall is reached from Cheapside where you may see the famous Bow Church steeple built by Wren. Between St. Paul's and the Tower are the Bank, Royal Exchange and Mansion House, all close together. Not far away, on the way to London Bridge, is the Monument erected as a memorial of the Fire of London.

II. After some exploration of the City the most informing—and wearying—thing would be a walk from the British Museum to Westminster by Trafalgar Square which we will make the

next centre. The ancient Charing Cross now destroyed, stood on the site of the Statue of King Charles I. The Nelson Column was built as a memorial to the famous sailor when the square was laid out and given its name : the four great lions around it are of bronze. The National Gallery exhibition of ancient pictures is one of the most perfect things in London. It is beautifully arranged, orderly and attractive. It contains thousands of pictures from European countries, mostly of high quality and many of them very famous, which were painted from the thirteenth century onwards. It is quite hopeless to see the pictures in any detail. I would recommend you to go forward into one of the great Italian Rooms and, taking a seat, to look round quietly for ten minutes to get a general impression ; then I would go to the English section where the pictures by Turner and Gainsborough are, and rest again. I will bother you with one general remark only about pictures. You must not think of them as funny things if they do not closely resemble nature as we see it. Just as in literature there are many forms : romances, poems and fairy-stories as well as the newspaper reports of what is supposed really to have happened, so there are many kinds of beautiful pictures : romances, poems and fairy stories in paint. Students who get to know the old pictures will find other kinds of truth in them than cinema "correctness"—some even say that it is a higher kind of truth. Children, too, who are curiously keensighted creatures, often seem to understand the old pictures. I must not ask too much but if you

would look again at some famous picture which at first sight may seem strange, with the understanding that there are different ways of looking at and seeing things, that would be a gain and part of education. On this question of pictures, too, I should like to try to say another word : pictures are not only things in themselves but they should help us to observe objects and scenes better. Often, on coming out from looking at pictures, people will say "Why everything I see looks like a picture." We ought to carry some of this power into the country with us and see real pictures wherever we go.

When you come out of the National Gallery, Westminster is straight in front of you ; diagonally to the left the Thames Embankment can easily be reached ; fully to the left, in the corner of the Square, is the big church of St.-Martin's-in-the-Fields. Turning up by this you will find, at the back of the building you have just visited, the National Portrait Gallery in which is a great number of portraits of distinguished people. School teachers would probably be wise to make an effort to see this, for portraits of people seem to make history much more real and believable than mere names and dates and statements in print. Diagonally to the right on coming out of the National Gallery is the big new archway entering the Mall approach to Buckingham Palace. Nearer to the right is Pall Mall, through which St. James's Palace, a pleasant old building, is reached and close by is Marlborough House. From St. James's Palace you pass through some of the courtyards to reach the London Museum which

may be interesting to visitors, from several points of view. The House itself is one of the five or six biggest and handsomest private palaces which were fully occupied in the Victorian era, but now seem falling out of use. Others are Devonshire House, Piccadilly, now vacant, Grosvenor House and Lansdowne House. The Museum contains collections relating to the history of London with models and paintings. An illuminated model of the Fire of London is quite worth seeing as a representation of old London which will remain in the mind. That I think, if I may prose about it, is one of the problems of "sight-seeing," we want to see such things as will best stick in the memory and furnish the mind. Here in the London Museum are many memorials of Queen Victoria, old costumes, toys and dolls and a carved and gilded cradle which is said to be "one of the most attractive features of the Museum." Just beyond this Museum is the Green Park through which Buckingham Palace may be reached: the Memorial to Queen Victoria stands just in front of the Palace.

III. Westminster is doubtless the most important centre after the City. The name means the West-monastery, that is the Abbey. The Abbey was first built about 1,000 years ago. Then the Kings built a Palace close to the Abbey. Westminster Hall is an ancient building which was the great hall of the King's palace. As you know the Houses of Parliament are still often called the Palace of Westminster, they are also called St. Stephen's because the old palace chapel, the

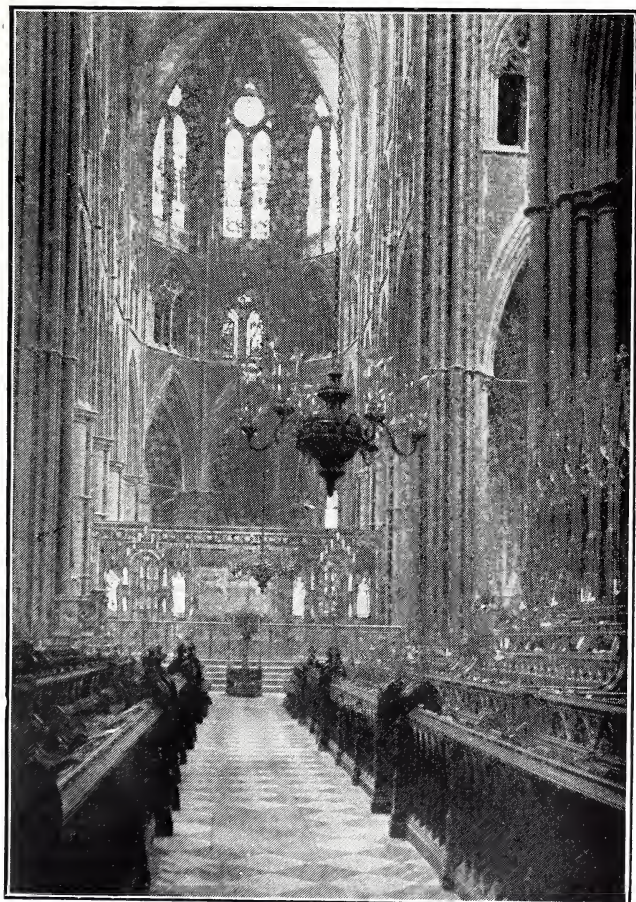


FIG. 41. *Westminster Abbey.*

under storey of which still exists, was the Royal chapel. That is the history of Westminster—an ancient Abbey founded by a King; a royal palace; Parliament.

At the Abbey the best thing for most people to do is to go well inside and sit down for quite a long time and not worry about seeing everything. The main body of the church as you see it was built from 1245 to 1270. The Warrior's Grave is near the West door of the nave, that is at the opposite end to the altar. Everybody should go out of the side door into the Cloister and walk round looking into the Chapter House. Teachers who have a special interest in history should go through the gate into the Eastern chapels and see the royal tombs from Edward the Confessor to Queen Elizabeth. Seeing actual monuments which may be touched makes the past more real to us. At the lower end of Whitehall, near the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament, stands the Cenotaph or War Memorial. A little further up on the right is the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace which was built by Charles I. Through one of the windows he was led to a scaffold outside. Just opposite through the Horse Guards, you can turn into St. James's Park, and find your way to Buckingham Palace and to Hyde Park. From the Cenotaph you can turn the other way to Westminster Bridge and the Thames Embankment whence you may see the new County Council Buildings. A tram ride along the Embankment may be suggested. Beyond Westminster up the river, is the Tate Gallery of modern pictures.

IV. Another typical centre is South Kensington with its great museums, the Albert Hall, Albert Memorial and Hyde Park. For some of the

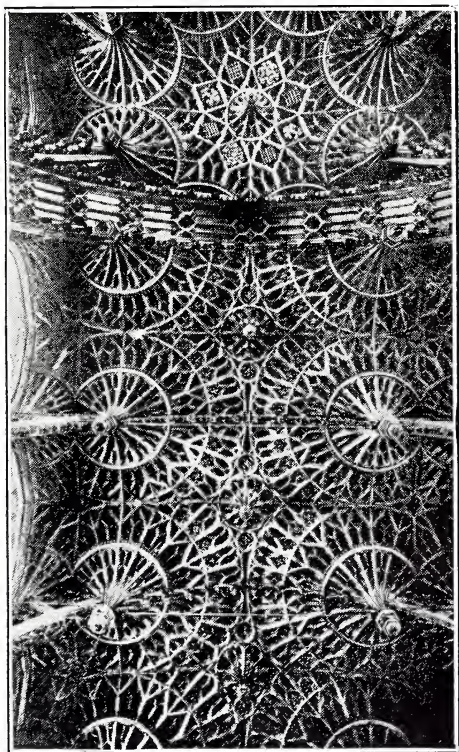


FIG. 42. *Westminster Abbey : Stone Roof of Henry VII's Chapel.*

visitors, especially for those who want to study subjects like the history of dress, embroidery and lace, the South Kensington Museum of Art will certainly be a great attraction. A little to the

west is the Natural History Museum, another vast building. To the north, between it and Hyde Park, are the Imperial Institute and the Indian Museum. Still further north against the Park is the Albert Hall. Half a mile across the Park, in a direction passing the Albert Memorial and the Round Pond, is Kensington Palace, a pleasant rambling old building with a pretty sunk garden and an old conservatory building called the Orangery. Turning rather to the right than to the left in the Park you may reach an open-air Tea House and beyond is the Bridge over the Serpentine.

Of course I have spoken of much more than you will be able to see and there are still dozens of things which are not even mentioned. The British Museum, one of the most important of all, has only been named. The Wallace Collection is another Museum in what was a great house. Southwark Cathedral and St. Bartholomew, Smithfield, are famous ancient churches. Regent's Park where the Zoological Gardens will be found may attract some, and Kew Gardens from early Spring to late Autumn will be a sight lovely to see. You will know more about the shops than I do. I wish you a delightful visit and a happy return home to resume Country Arts.

VII

VILLAGE ARTS AND CRAFTS

HERE I want to consider three things and I hope you will think them over with me : I wish (1) to determine what seems to be the natural and proper place of craft-work in a reasonable form of country life, more or less supplementary to farming ; (2) to put on record some testimony as to the present position of such crafts ; (3) to speak of the possibility of still carrying on some of the old industries as secondary and alternative employments.

As an introduction to what should be said I will begin by condensing a passage from an article on traditional country crafts by my friend, Mr. Alfred Powell, in a little volume called *Handicrafts and Reconstruction* (Pitman). This chapter indeed will be largely quotation, for several interesting replies have been sent to me in answer to enquiries as to what craft work is being done in country districts.

“ Agriculture and building have suffered from our neglecting to make full use of the traditional knowledge and work of which the villages are still the great repositories. . . . We should remember that the effort necessary to provide intelligently food, shelter and clothing, leads along so many interesting ways, that a nation quietly

trained to handcraft is an educated nation. . . . A long list might be made of essential occupations still being carried on. Of the works connected with agriculture, not including the art of cultivating the ground, we find the following work still being done by hand : waggon and cart-building, the wheelwright's work, the making of all such farm implements as harrows, ploughs, rakes, prongs, hurdles, fencing, gates, sheep-cots, cribs, troughs. And of works dependent upon building, we find stone-quarrying and the preparation of it at the quarry, brick and tile-making, felling and squaring of timber, carpenter's work, mainly with axe and saw, local forms of walling, as cob and timber framing, weather-boarded barns etc., thatching with straw, reed and heather, carving stone and wood, but this has almost entirely disappeared. There are still at work tin-smiths, copper-smiths, saddlers, whipsters, cabinet-makers, clock-makers, potters, basket-makers, mat-makers, shoe-makers, spinners and weavers. And in the farmhouses are brewing, baking and dairy work. If all these works were in a flourishing condition it would give to our country that look of full flushed life noticeable in Holland or Denmark. . . . One or two good thatchers to each county would probably be an overestimate, and of those who know how to stake and lay a hedge properly the number is far too small. . . . In the month of May, when the undergrowth of hazel has been cut, there are men making wattled or 'flake' hurdles. These are precisely the material used by the ancient British for building the walls of their houses: the knowledge of seasons, of the nature of the copse

woods, of the quality of the hurdle and of how to make it, is one of those inherited wisdoms that is being neglected out of existence. . . . The blacksmith's, too, was a marvellous art. Until quite recently there have been scattered all over England little potteries supplying local needs.



FIG. 43. *A Country Waggon.*

One after another they have shut down and the flood of machine goods inundates us."

This passage suggests much to think over ; as, for instance, the traditional development of the old arts all of which came down to our time from remote antiquity ; the idea that these things embodied much that seems essential to human

development, that they are in fact "inherited wisdoms" and made the workers "an educated nation"; and finally the general picture of life on the land—a sense of things being done and something going on, "a look of full flushed life."

The craft which best maintains its traditions is probably that of the waggon-builder, but even this seems to be rapidly changing under modern conditions of making up machine-made parts. A characteristic of these naturally exercised crafts is the skill the "artists" have for foreseeing the completed work and going ahead without bungling. I remember talking to a Devonshire waggon-builder whom I passed working in a jolly open shop by the wayside. "Do you make a drawing of a cart before you begin it?" "No, we know what we are going to do and match the shafts and things in pairs." Their ornaments of notches and chamfers are perfect for their kind of work—a natural embroidery with the tools they use. The skill of framing and fitting is amazing—all has to hold together without nails and glue. Then the cart painters have a wonderful instinct, lost by the rest of the world, for using the brightest colours harmoniously—gay red for the wheels, bright yellow or blue for the body, and their power of hand in striking long lines of paint is astonishing. A Royal Academician painter could no more do it than fly without a machine. In some places flourishes of curves are skilfully painted which are the most living painted decoration done in England.

A Government report on farming in Berkshire in 1794 remarks that "the Berkshire waggon has

long been noticed for its peculiar lightness and elegance." Yes, indeed, it is one of the most *elegant* things still made. I remember that William Morris calling something handsome, added "not the handsomeness of a fashionable dress,



FIG. 44.

but of a farm-waggon"; and that reminds me that handsome must properly mean a thing well made by hand.

Blacksmiths, too, still hold on here and there. I take a note from my diary, of a walk one July day in 1918, within thirty miles of London in uninjured country: "Passing a blacksmith's

shop and attracted by the ringing strokes and glowing sparks, I looked in. 'How tidy and jolly you look; what a nice place a workshop is.' 'Yes, I like to keep it tidy.' Then, noticing his tools and things—'What pretty fire irons!' 'Do you think so? I made them myself when I was a boy.' 'They are splendid, such a good handle to grip—the second piece is welded on, isn't it?' 'Yes; it's been a good deal worn with use.' 'Did you think of it yourself?' 'Well, I saw some of the sort and thought I'd make mine something like.' "



FIG. 45. *Blacksmith's Fire-Shovel.*

Harness-making and saddlery was an extensive and beautiful craft up to "my time." One of my early memories of beauty is of noticing outside saddlers' shops in a country town the pretty and intricate patterns which were stitched on ladies' side-saddles. Somehow even to this day horses seem to object to vulgarity and to like old-fashioned things! In Kent, I am told, that the brass trappings (how pretty they are!) and the red fringed cloth worn by cart horses are called " housings " and this, I believe, is a good old-fashioned word. Of a Northumberland village a correspondent says that local saddlery disappeared with the corn laws, after which much more land was turned to pasture.

Even shoe-making seems to be “going out.” The most interesting piece of current everyday leather-work I have seen is a pair of “hedging cuffs” or gloves, which has been sent to me from Burford, in Oxfordshire. They are made of thick horsehide, with marvellous skill—that skill which is so simple when you can do it! “The right hand glove is more supple in order that the bill-hook may be properly grasped. The left

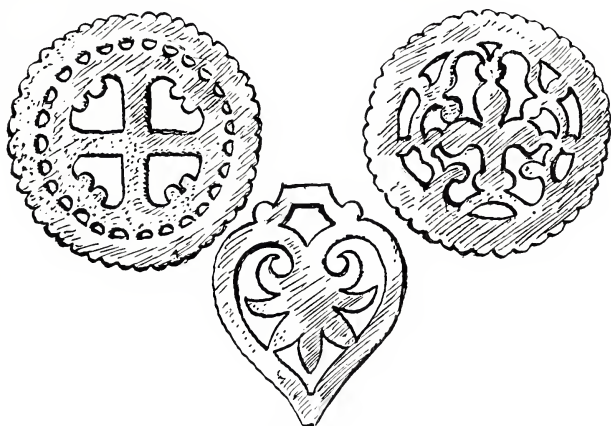



FIG. 46. *Brass Horse-Trappings.*

hand glove has to be thick so that it may be pushed into the hedge. At the same time one ought to be able to grasp a branch with the thumb. This pattern has been made in the same place in Burford for over 100 years and is characteristic of the neighbourhood.” I was not told the maker’s name, but from a label it appears to be Mr. Hudson. Each glove is made of two principal pieces of  shape and a small extra piece attached to the palm to complete the thumb.

I say complete the thumb, for half of it is made in the most ingenious way, out of the palm piece itself, by cutting in at an angle and turning up the flap. It is impossible to explain in words, the geometry is too difficult and all is done to avoid waste of material. The sewing is by a thick hide thong, and where the stuff has to be "gathered up" to make room it falls into a series of rolls each bound over by the thong in a way delightful to see. We have taken these things for granted, but they embody centuries of tradition with high skill, and the thing is perfect of its kind—a work of art. Two hundred years ago I find Burford described as famous for saddles and horses. Such cuffs have doubtless been made there for hundreds of years.

I have also been shown some excellent gloves now being made by a co-operative industry associated with the Dunchurch and Thurlaston Women's Institute near Rugby; it is pleasant to find that such work—handicraft indeed—may still flourish.

Mrs. Huddart mentions the making of trug baskets in Sussex and adds, "There used to be rope walks, tan-yards and local coopers, which I remember, but they have disappeared. The one-man industry cannot now cope with machinery." These trug baskets seem to have been invented nearly a century ago by Thomas Smith of Hurstmonceaux, where they are still made.

Of Essex Mrs. Christy writes: "Just a few old people remain in this county who can plait straw for hat-making and until lately one of the old 'dummy' heads for fitting the hats on was in

existence. An attempt was made during the war to revive this industry but it was found it would be hopeless to compete with machine-made straw hats. The old men in Essex are still able to make straw bee-hives or 'skeps.' In the same way they twist straw into round flat mats, about two inches thick, used at a garden or greenhouse door to wipe feet on and not too good to be thrown away when dirty and sodden."

Mat-making as a domestic occupation is done in several counties. Miss Ruth Anderson, of Westleton, Suffolk, has been good enough to show me two mats, one ingeniously made of rows of twine in a spiral (like a steel spring) on a base of strong sail-cloth. "This type was made long ago and has recently been revived." The other is "a plaited rag mat" of a very pretty colour, compact and with both sides alike. This, too, must be of old fashion, for I am told that "rag mats" are made in America.

Miss Bosanquet, says of Cambo, Northumberland, "In this district 'stobbit mats' are made of old cloth cut into fragments, each pushed, that is 'stobbit,' through a piece of sacking. Sometimes the workers make their own designs for arranging the several colours or else they get them from each other. The men sometimes draw them out and help with the work. The farmers take their wool to be woven into blankets, rugs and tweed. At the old mills at Otterburn and Netherwitten beautiful tweeds and rugs are produced which are famous in the north. Much of the wool comes back to the farms as blankets and tweed. The last of the old cottage weavers died in the

year 1860 (?). He wove beautiful house linen, supplementing it with other work."

"In the old days the people used to sit round the fire making besoms (brooms), wooden bowls, spoons and 'swills' (large open baskets) to be sent afterwards to the Newcastle firms which took them. The children gathered round listening to the stories the old people told. The men would carve knitting sheaths for their wives or sweethearts; the sheaths often took the form of a chain carved out of a single piece of wood, with a pocket-knife. The sheath was made to hook on to the skirt band and one needle was fixed in it as the woman knitted. Date, initials and designs were carved on the sheaths or a chain would be carved with tiny loose balls, one inside each link. Wooden spoons and all sorts of useful contrivances in wood or metal are still made by handy men for their homes."

"The people at Cambo have told me of three men—none of them living now—who used to make violins. Three of the violins have been shown to me—two signed with the maker's name. This maker had another trade and only made the violins in the evenings, so it took more than a winter to make one. They are of beautifully grained wood, well finished and have a good tone. I was listening three weeks ago to the playing of Northumberland pipes, bag-pipes, worked by a wind-bag under the arm. Another piper said his pipes had been made by his father—a piper before him—and he mentioned half a dozen people for whom he and his father had made pipes. Kid-skin is used and ivory is shaped

to the forms required. The piper is also a shoemaker."

That surely is being alive and being an "educated" man, with a knowledge of science and art!

Of Buckinghamshire the following account has been sent to me by Mrs. Woodgate:

"The great industry of the villages surrounding High Wycombe is turning legs and spokes of chairs. A large proportion of Windsor chairs is made in Wycombe. The lathe used is very primitive. In many cases wooden huts are built in the beech woods and the trees are felled, cut up and the wood turned on the spot. A foot lathe is used and a strong sapling bent down to form the top spring. I think this must be of very old origin. Many of the older women can plait straw and three Women's Institutes have sent specimens of straw plait to the Victoria and Albert Museum, but the work does not pay and there is great difficulty in getting the right straw. Another industry is 'beading' and a great many village women excel at this. The beads are sewn on net in elaborate patterns. Large quantities of buttons covered with crochet are also made. Very few of the younger women now make lace, although they keep the pillows and bobbins used by their grandmothers. Each bobbin very often has a history. Unfortunately real Bucks' 'point' is now seldom made, imitation Torchon and Maltese laces being more quickly done and cheaper."

The question of secondary and supplementary employments mentioned above seems to me of

enormous importance. It is not merely a matter of money, it is a matter of intelligence, "culture," life, art. Mr. Christopher Turnor, the agricultural expert, writes: "In other countries, for many years past, much attention has been given to the development of dual occupations. Before the war some seventy per cent. of the Antwerp dock labourers had sufficient garden land to feed their families and give them occupation when dock work was slack. . . . The development of subsidiary industries in the rural districts has, so far, received scant attention. There are many districts in which small holdings by themselves can scarcely succeed, but, in addition to the small holdings, were a subsidiary industry organised in the neighbourhood at which the smallholder's family and the smallholders themselves in their spare time could work, small holdings would flourish. . . . One reason why small holdings are not more successful is that they attempt to compete with the large farms, whereas they should concentrate on special branches. We have villages turning out furniture, metal-work, basket-work, pottery, but we want to see more villages taking up these and other kinds of occupation. As far as possible these should be co-operative; there should be collective buying and selling. Above all they should be utilised as a means for developing community life. The moment is opportune for the development of craft in country districts, for we are on the eve of changes in education. A development of manual work is bound to take place in schools and this will give us a rising generation capable of using its hands."

Mr. Nugent Harris has let me see a valuable report on Rural Industries in the North Riding of Yorkshire, issued by the County Council, which is so much the kind of thing I wanted to try to say that I should like to quote it all and give the references to books there mentioned. All I can do, however, is to copy a paragraph or two :

“Time was when the village communities of England were self-contained: parishes were isolated and self-supporting. Implements and domestic utensils were largely home-made. Linen came not only from flax but from nettles, nettle table-cloths survived until the end of the eighteenth century. Women wove and dyed the cloth as well as malted the barley, brewed the ale and baked the bread. In Wensleydale and the adjoining Dales—Swaledale, Garsdale and Dent—there lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century women so proficient in knitting that they were called the terrible knitters of Dent. The industry was considerable in the sixteenth century, when Thomas Cæsar wrote—‘In Richmond there be above 1,000 Knitters which do make about 166 dozen every week. . . . The merchants which buy confess there is made every fortnight fourteen or sixteen packs and every pack containeth forty dozen pairs.’ It was said as regards Richmond, ‘You see all the people great and small a-knitting the hand-made stockings which are made very coarse and ordinary.’ In 1769 knitting was still the most important industry in Richmond, but in 1822 machinery had dealt a fatal blow.”

“The factory system and domestic system were

carried on side by side, the articles knitted in the homes of the Dales were bought by a mill owner at Sedburgh and retailed with the products of his own mills."

"Weaving is a West Riding industry. Though the general use of hand-loom has been discontinued it is interesting to observe that work has been re-introduced on a small scale and the operators of hand-loom find they can compete with machine-made goods. Sailcloth was woven at Whitby and the making of stays was carried on at Loftus, near by. Around Whitby the jet industry has ceased to give employment to more than a handful of men. In 1873 there were no fewer than 200 workshops employing 1,500 hands. The North Riding was at one time the scene of pottery-making. A John Wedgwood made pots at Walmgate. There was also a group of potteries on the Tees; these have now reverted to the making of bricks and tiles."

After this survey of the past, this admirable report goes on to consider "the Revival of Industries; Domestic industries as a means of alleviating unemployment in rural districts; the Disposal of Goods; and Credit Banks."

A few centuries ago the art of spinning wool was practised as a domestic art and it still continues in being in out-of-the-way districts. I have myself seen an old woman in France spinning in the more primitive way with a distaff as she walked along a country road. In the eighteenth century in many English districts spinning was practised as an industry in the cottages. "Spinning had afforded a very remunerative by-employment and

the earnings of women and children had provided a most useful supplement to the wages of the labourer. When spinning was concentrated in factories and carried on as an independent employment it was entirely diverted from the rural districts and there has been no means of supplying its place in the domestic economy of the cottage home. Thus the decay of domestic spinning has had very grave effects on the comfort and prosperity of the rural population."

In recent years several experiments to revive weaving have been made by enthusiastic women and men—missionaries for the crafts—and I have before me a specimen of a wholesome "cloth suiting of natural brown crossed with walnut; all spun from the fleece dyed and woven here" (A Cottage Industry in Essex). I enquired of Mr. H. Peach as to minor weaving arts and he sent me the following note which must be put on record; he also sent some specimens of pretty bright strips from one and a half to four inches wide, in tartan-like patterns:

"We were up in a lovely part near Ullswater in May two years ago and put our heads in at the door of the little school and asked the keen teacher what handiwork her little group of children from the scattered farms was doing. 'Have you tried spinning?' 'Oh, no, that's far too difficult!' Next day we turned up with a spindle chopped out with a knife and gave a lesson in spinning. The children were delighted and we heard in a few months of several in the valley who were spinning their own wool for knitting. Weaving followed, first with the little

braid loom. They dyed their wool with the lichen from the rocks, trees etc. and made little belts, hat bands, ties, and sewed strips together for little bags, babies' bonnets and dress trimmings. So they learned the elements of weaving and I heard that a farmer was fixing up a full-fledged loom for the teacher."

"Look at the lovely braids and trimmings one sees in the museums of Sweden and the Balkans, all done with the simplest apparatus, one end of the warp fixed on your belt, the other hooked to the wall and a little reed to move the 'shed' up and down. Or you can use the small frame and make belts and scarves and if you get really keen you will finish by proper weaving and get a real loom. You will look at your clothes quite differently after a few experiments. There is a lot of wool on the hedges and you will learn much about it when you come to twist it up by revolving the little spindle—long staple and short staple, coarse wools and fine wools. You can use it as it is for your knitting or dye it with simple old-fashioned dyes—lichen from the trees and rocks, the heather tops, willow bark, onion skins. Ask old people what they used. Spinning and weaving are work like knitting for you can take them up and put them down as you wish. It is not too much to think and hope that many of our villages will get looms back again and the people will make their own clothes."

"Even in far-away Skye the art of weaving homespun woollens has almost died out. A generation ago when the little pastures from one end of Skye to the other were a succession of sheep

farms there was a loom in almost every house and two in quite a few. Now one sees what is left of the looms filling up old gateways and in one extensive parish only one professional weaver remains. Thousands of pounds worth of wool is shipped from the island every year to Glasgow. I see dozens of men in tweed to one clothed in homespun—the looms have gone and the spinning wheels are going.”

Love of locality and joy in making things must be two of the deepest instincts we have ; where work is done there is adventure and life and matter for pride. Doubtless the present phase we are going through, of getting everything we need and heaps of things we do not, by ship and rail from the ends of the earth rather than let Mr. Jones next door make them for us, means something as an historical development, but it cannot last “for ever.” Possibly its meaning may be to teach us that a world without work going on would mean a very dead-alive existence in a mental desert. Directly there was nothing to be done but go to cinemas, how we should hate them !

I quoted before, when writing of lace, from an old description of England by Defoe. In it he notes the local products of the several districts and the mere mention of the facts suggests vitality and a sort of romance. “Stroud was famous not only for the finest cloths, but for dyeing those cloths into the beautifullest scarlets and other grand colours. Here I saw two pieces of broadcloth made, one scarlet, the other crimson in grain.” In another book, “The Complete English Tradesman,” Defoe again tells with pride

how an Englishwoman of his day would be clothed with home products. The silk would be made at Spitalfields. "The binding of chequered stuff" came from Bristol or Norwich ; her petticoat "of black callamanca" made at Norwich was "quilted at home, if she be a good housewife" ; her flannel and swanskin were from Salisbury and Wales ; her stockings from Tewkesbury or Leicester ; her lambskin gloves from Northumberland and Scotland ; her ribbands from Coventry and London ; her riding-hood of "worsted camblet" from Norwich ; "her lace and edgings from Stony-Stratford and Great Marlow."

VIII

WORK FESTIVALS

AGAIN I want to say that my purpose has been to suggest to kindly readers and to stir in their hearts the general idea of every-day art or quality in common doings. Many years ago I remember saying in regard to the great things (as we pretend) of cities, that "art" was only the well doing of what needs doing; now I should like to say the same of the simpler and possibly superior things of country life. I have wanted to bring up for consideration two ways of effort: one, aiming at entertainment and joy in labour and in the ordinary necessities of existence: the other, not so much aiming, but by neglect and lack of clear sight, making of work a hateful slavery and trying to compensate in "amusements." For myself, if I may venture to say anything so serious, I doubt if it be possible to preserve for long the modern habit of making a separate employment of amusement. I believe that it is only a transitional stage and that by divorcing our joys from our necessary work we shall later find that these isolated amusements themselves are dead and dreary. There is hardly any work in which men engage which is so hard as football and cricket, but these seem delightful now because they are *free arts* which have not yet been chained

to machinery and routine. It is the room for individual prowess and praise which makes games so attractive.

Teachers of book knowledge are coming to see that better results are often obtained by the "play-way" of teaching than by plodding and tears. Study of old work of all kinds shows us that a play element was maintained in it all as necessary to its very self and being—an element which we may call variously pleasure or quality or poetry or art. Many of the customs in the army and navy come of the same tradition, there is a sporting element in them and someday we shall, I hope, find it wise to discover a sport's way in all the things of labour and discipline. I might illustrate further from Boy Scouting and Girl Guiding and, doubtless, from Women's Instituting, that the greatest delight is to be gained from mixing discipline with sport, labour with play, and this is Art.

Of old time, farming, while as it always has been mighty hard work, was organised to include a series of festivals such as sheep shearing and harvest home. The harvest of course was the great event of the year. Even our school holidays "were not designed as periods of rest, they came at harvest time when all hands were required, young and old from early morn till late at night. Survivals of such conditions are still met with in rural parts, for example in Kent where the hop harvest determines the date of the summer vacation of the primary schools."

Some descriptions of recently existing festivals have been sent to me through the Women's

Institutes. Mrs. Huddart says: "The sheep shearers in Sussex went about in gangs of thirty or forty men. The captain wore gold braid on his hat, the lieutenant had silver braid": think of that, captains of labour "dressed up" like military men! "Each man was expected to shear thirty or forty sheep a day": was it possible? "When the shearing was finished there were supper and songs—

I've been to France and I've been to Dover,
And I've been wandering lads all the world over,
Over and over and over and over,
Drink up the liquor and turn the cup over.

The shearer had to throw the empty horn up in the air from a hat, turn the hat round and catch the horn as it came down."

Of the Harvest Festival she says, "If the harvest was brought in without accident, such as a load being upset, the harvesters gathered round the farm house and shouted these words, which were called 'the Holloaring Pot.'

We've ploughed, we've sowed,
We've reaped, we've mowed,
We've gathered the harvest and not o'erthrow'd,
Hip hip! hurrah! hurrah!

After this each man was given a glass of beer."

In Miss Eileen Power's recent book on English Nunneries* she quotes a record of a similar custom in the middle ages, when a goose was given for not overturning a load.

* "English Nunneries." Eileen Power. 35s. Cambridge University Press.

Of Essex harvest customs Mrs. Christy writes : " In this county the farmer ' lets ' his harvest to the men at so much an acre. He provides horses and waggons and so much beer or ' beer-money ' per day. The arrangement of the work is in the hands of one man, generally the one most expert in stacking, who is called ' the Lord of the Harvest,' and who receives instalments of money each week and pays the other men. At the end of the harvest the men expect a holiday and the loan of a waggon, and make an expedition known as ' going to pay for the beer.' Of late years, the wives have brought tea into the field in time for the break in work known as ' fours,' with much success both as regards pocket and the amount of work done. A bell is rung in some villages to say that gleaning may be begun, generally about nine o'clock, so that the women who have had to send children off to school, may have a chance to begin with the rest. In other places a sheaf is left in the field and till it is removed no gleaning may be done, the same end being in view."

Mrs. Christy says of Lancashire : " In this county it is customary to make a small twisted ornament of corn to be kept in the house of the farmer till the next harvest ; this is called ' the neck ' (or nek), the custom is possibly of Scandinavian origin."

In Devonshire in my father's time making and preserving " the neck " was part of the harvest custom. As I remember being told, it was plaited from the last corn cut. The man who had cut the last handful put two sickles on the ground and standing between them cried, lifting up the corn,

“ a Neck, a Neck ” ; he then ran with it to the house, the others trying to block the way and take it from him ; the harvest supper followed. In some account of Ireland I was reading recently, a similar custom was mentioned and it might be even pre-English in origin. Mrs. Huddart says of Sussex, “ The small doll was the last sheaf brought in from the field. This was stored in the barn until Christmas and then put out on a pole for birds.”

Miss Bosanquet tells me of Cambo in Northumberland : “ Here the last handful of corn cut was the ‘ Kern baby ’ ; it was carried round the field and a ‘ Kern supper ’ followed. The mistress of the farm was called out to drive the last load home.” From one point of view these are only funny or foolish old customs, but from other aspects they are deeply human and poetical. They are of vast antiquity and link up to corn and harvest dances and ceremonies all the world over. The little sheaf, the corn baby, must in some way have been thought to guarantee the harvest of another year by preserving the living corn spirit. The farmer’s wife driving the waggon is another nice touch.

I wish I might put in here a word for the remembrance of our own continuity with the past. Such a thought, so readily suggested by any sight of the land cultivated for unknown ages, of the roads which go back to the British and Roman days and of the parish churches usually built from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, gives a valuable background to life. Even the fields have names full of interest. We accept it as

natural that the Jews should have had a book telling about their origin, antiquities and deeds, but we ought to have a like interest in our own story.

Wheat harvest was only the most typical of a series of farm festivals; sheap-shearing, as mentioned above, was another. I am told that at Stokenchurch "there are traces of an old festival to celebrate the cherry harvest, but this only survives in a sort of rivalry amongst the women in making cherry-turnovers." Here too is an important annual fair "originally the Wake of St. Peter, the patron saint, held in the churchyard. Housewives buy their necessary crockery at this time."

Hop gathering too had its festivals and rites—all these customs indeed almost amounted to a ritual—and doubtless they have come down to our time in changed forms from ages when agriculture was conducted as a nature rite.

A correspondent at Frant writes: "One custom we had when the last hop-pole was pulled. They would pluck the leaves off and all the young folk would get together and a man would march round the garden with the pole on his shoulder, the children following and shouting hurrah! Then they would take the pole to the oldest picker and everyone would gather round and pick the hops into his or her bin."

The Secretary of the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes has been good enough to send me a note of old hop-picking customs, with a photograph of "an old 'Tally Stick' used in former days to mark the measure of hops in the



FIG. 47. *Unloading Hops at the Oast House.*
(From a postcard by Young & Cooper, Maidstone.)

bin, instead of writing it in a book. One 'Tally Stick' was held by the measurer and one by the picker, and the measure was notched on the stick. The 'Horn' which has not long been given up, called the pickers in the morning and blew for the dinner hour, 'hops ready' and 'oasts full.' In quite old days pickers were paid a bonus for taking a bin and at the end of hopping the farmer gave them all a 'goose feast.' In the days when the pickers were nearly all home pickers, the hopping sometimes lasted into November. The 'Foreigners' who did pick had a poor time on the whole, as accommodation for them was not compulsory—their lodging was often indeed 'on the cold ground.' In those times one's barn and out-houses were liable to be invaded."

The Tally Stick is an interesting survival; such tallies were used in the King's Exchequer in the early Middle Ages.

Fig. 47 is a delightful view of a Kentish oast house, as fine in its way as a Cathedral, with a nice waggon and people thrown in—life, work and picture all in one.

In a Government report on Berkshire farming, issued by the then newly-formed Board of Agriculture in 1794, is an interesting account of the extension of the annual festival to encourage spinning and gardening as well as mowing and reaping. This was the Spinning Feast established at Nuneham at the end of the Eighteenth Century :

"Lord and Lady Harcourt to promote industry amongst the women, about sixteen of whom could

turn the wheel, invited them to spin for prizes. In a few years the number increased, and after the prizes were determined the villagers were suffered to dance before the house. Besides the reward for spinning, a hat was given to the man who kept his cottage-garden in the best order, another to the best mower and a third to the best reaper. The plan was revived in 1788. . . . The business of the day may be distinguished into four parts, the first of which is the Reward of Merit. The persons who are honoured are elected by those who have already gained the prize and who form the Society of Merit. The admissions each time are limited to four: man, woman, boy and girl. Towards the latter end of June the Society assembles at Lord Harcourt's house and follows in procession to the Church. The next division was a dinner under a clump of elms. Dinner being ended, the wheels decorated with nosegays are placed in a circle and the spinning begins and continues about two hours, a band playing all the time and the sound mixed with buzzing of the wheels completes one of the gayest scenes. When the spinning is finished and the thread reeled, the spinners, now more than fifty, tie their names to their hanks which are divided into those spun by girls under sixteen and by those above that age. The parcels were then judged by a weaver and the names declared. The prizes decreasing in value are generally gained by two-thirds of the whole number. During this time the ball-room is preparing and the decorations are extremely beautiful. An Ionic colonnade encloses a piece of turf ninety feet by forty-five,

and the intervals between the columns are ornamented with festoons of lamps. On entering you perceive in front the word *merit* formed by lamps and on each side a transparent picture representing the cottages of industry and idleness. Here the spinning prizes are distributed, after which the villagers dance to midnight, and terminate a day which is the happiest and perhaps the most useful in the year. They who have obtained the prize of merit are further distinguished by the letter M on the lintel of their doors."

In the same Government report on farming in Berkshire is a passage on harvesting which sounds wonderfully human for an official document. "At this joyous season of the year, it is certainly proper that every rural inhabitant should not only have a proportionate increase of comfort, but likewise have an opportunity given him by industrious exertions to lay up, like the ant, some little resource against the pinching blasts of winter. . . . Labourers hire themselves out elsewhere for the harvest, and board in the farmhouse. Many good effects arise from this mode, yet the wife and children are uninterested in getting in the crops and whilst the man is living in a degree of festivity beyond his usual style his family is idle at home experiencing want during the time of reaping." In Berkshire itself it was the custom that the mowing, reaping etc. were "let by the acre, the wife and children being employed with the father." This plan is praised and the author makes the recommendation "that every industrious poor man should have a sufficiency of

land not only to raise vegetables but to keep a cow." There is much to comment on here but I may only refer to the tone of the report and the recognition that harvest was a "joyous season" in which the labourer lived "in a degree of festivity." We don't now get phrases like this in our frozen Blue Books.

In earlier days it was the tendency for every institution to have its festival. Beating the bounds of a parish was both good instruction and good fun.

The annual fair of every neighbourhood was a fête as well as a market.

In building, when the roof ridge was set up, a branch or bunch of green stuff was tied to a pole on a high point. I have seen this also on the continent and it has the look of a very ancient custom.

Hunting, with the red coats and all the forms and ceremonies, was a festival. The fun of it (to some people) is delightfully suggested by the illustration of a village inn (Fig. 48) which I borrow from *Home and Country*. At Leighton Buzzard, a charity founded in 1630 is kept in mind by reading parts of the will at various sites. "In each place, too, a boy stands on his head so that he may not forget the spot, while the remainder cheer the ancient benefactor's generosity; the itinerary ended at the Alms-Houses which were erected in 1630. The boy who stands on his head receives one shilling and the remainder sixpence each." Older Church and Guild Festivals were great and gorgeous ceremonies. The noble passion play at Ober-Ammergau in

Austria is an example of one, Lord Mayor's Show in London of the other.

To-day, while I am writing, there is an account



FIG. 48. *The Fox and Hounds Inn, Barley (Herts.).*

The headquarters of the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin, who was hanged at York, 1739.

in the newspaper of the Midland custom of "well dressings." "It began by being an act

of thankfulness, the wells ran dry almost everywhere during a drought, but in three villages there was a supply of water. . . . The occasion is one of great festivity provided that the weather is kind. . . . Into a bed of wet clay, flowers are inserted until a large picture is painted." The theory of origin given above must be an invention. In Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire*, an old book, I find this ; "They have a custom in this county of adorning their wells on Holy Thursday, with boughs and flowers. Hithertofores it was usual to pay this respect to such wells as were eminent for curing distempers, on the Saint's day whose name the well bore, diverting themselves with cakes and ale and a little music and dancing, which was also an innocent recreation. This ancient custom is to this day observed in Litchfield and many neighbouring towns, where the clergyman of each parish attended by churchwardens and a concourse of children with green boughs in their hands, reads the gospel for the day."

While I am writing this page a post card comes in from France: "Caudebec was *en fête* on Sunday ; its streets were hung with white cloths having little bunches of flowers pinned to them reminding one of Morris' 'Daisy pattern.'" That is pretty and may be recommended to the Institutes as an idea for festival decorations.

Sir Rider Haggard, who is a keen student of country life, remarks in a letter to the press, that it is idle for us to expect such a return from the land as Danes and Dutch get. "We have not," he says, "the same deep love of it, for we English

are primarily traders and adventurers not tillers of the soil." I hope that this is not altogether true, for this deep love of the land is one of the profoundest things there is, it is of the very substance from which a proud national life springs and grows strong. Whether we have much or little of this love we must aim at increasing and intensifying it and the method of the festival is one way. Conscious love of land, sky, fields and trees, with some story knowledge of the neighbourhood in which we find ourselves, are certainly great gains to Life. They furnish a background.

IX

FARMS AND COTTAGES

I wish I knew enough about the crafts of farming to write intelligently about hurdle-making, rick-building, ploughing and reaping, but I do not. I can only look on from outside in a half wistful way: I see the antiquity, poetry and beauty of all these things and I am struck with some chill of fear lest they be altered past recognition by modern mechanisms. Our country customs with the villages, hamlets, farms and cottages, still represent the idea of England in most of our hearts. They are moreover the fresh wells for the renewal of our national strength. If we were all shut up in cities life itself would soon dry up. All the old customs and nice tidinesses of farming deserve grateful recognition by everybody. To do things "just so," what a Devonshire man would call "fitty like," is not only the pride of farmers but gives delight to all.

At Cambo, Northumberland, Miss Bosanquet informs me, ploughmen set up posts on the side of the field opposite the starting point, "each man keeping the post he is aiming for between the heads of his pair of horses." In gardening, too, "great thought is given to laying out cottage vegetable gardens to get the rows straight and right. Nobody knows how difficult this and all

other country work is until they try." I don't know what most people call the work of ploughing and gardening and of rick-building, but I call it *art* and this art, competence, pride and care for accuracy and finish, is found everywhere where old customs are living. A kind correspondent has sent me pretty sketches, reproduced in Figs. 49 and 50, of some neatly thatched Northamptonshire



FIG. 49. Hayricks at Blatberwyck (Northants), "thacker," Mr. Sturgess.

corn-ricks. The artist thatcher who made these was not content until he had perched some straw birds on the peaks of the thatching—these are triumphs, long may this race of birds continue to exist.

Of West Kent I am told that flails were still used for threshing so late as 1860. I remember seeing and *hearing* them used in Devon some years

later—it is one of my earliest memories. We talk of unskilled labour, but I wonder whether wielding the flail properly was not more difficult than playing golf? At Westerham my correspondent adds, “there was a glover and fellmonger about 1800 and a little later basket-making, cooperage and a rope walk were carried on. None of these survive there now.” I remember rope walks when I was a small boy and an Institute correspondent tells me of some that still exist.

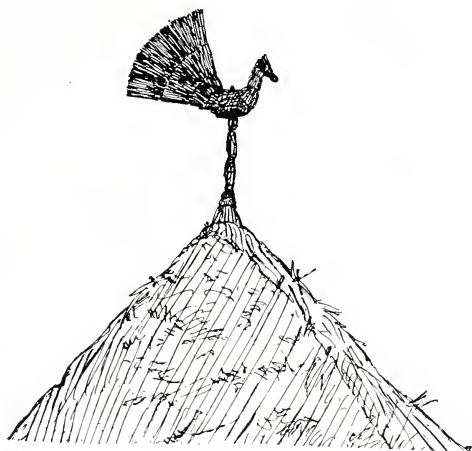


FIG. 50.

Of farm and cottage buildings there is so much to say that I cannot even begin to tell the tale. These buildings seem to have grown from the ground and to be part of the very nature of things. Above all, the dear cottages—where they are kept in order—and their lovely gardens, represent England more than any other things. I chanced the other day to see in a book by an

advanced philosopher, Mr. Bertrand Russell, something to the effect that what he meant by beauty or art was English cottage gardens. And so say I. This art about which I have been trying to talk is not some strange, proud product found in cities, it is humanity in workmanship, the evidence of a kindly and contented life, it is not far from everyone of us. I give one or two photographs of country buildings, sweet and



FIG. 51. *Old Weaversden.*

(From a postcard by Martin Bros., Frittenden, Staplehurst.)

dignified, which have been sent to me. There must still be scores of thousands more or less of the kind. As I think of these and of how they are falling into disrepair and how they are being destroyed, I seem to see that most of the great things in England will only be guarded by the good will of such bodies as the Women's Institutes.

We city people passing in quick trains take it all for granted, but, alas! the buildings are passing as well as the trains, and similar buildings will never again be found. The point I want to

make specially clear is that neatly kept old buildings of which the tiles, thatch and black boarding are repaired instead of being patched, blotched and botched with corrugated iron and other abominations are not only private prides, but public services and national treasure as well. If we would preserve our old buildings we must learn to see and love them and then set about making them sound and habitable.



FIG. 52. *Idenden Farm.*

(From a postcard by Martin Bros., Frittenden, Staplehurst.)

The photographs of old buildings reproduced were sent from the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes : they are all from one small village, Frittenden. Fig. 51 shows Old Weaversden, one of the oldest houses in Frittenden used a long time ago by a weaver. Fig. 52 is Idenden Farm, built in 1600. Fig. 53 is Cole Farm, Frittenden.

Country houses, farms and cottages had furniture as right and fit as the buildings and ricks ; all was of a piece, the product of local labour, understanding and tradition. Two chairs

are here illustrated from drawings "done by a farmer's son in the village," sent me by the secretary of the Holywell-cum-Needingworth Women's Institute. "The child's arm chair" (Fig. 54) "is a charming little thing, very old, it will not stand a new rush seat." Old it is indeed and of a much older fashion than this actual specimen. There are some fine examples of the type in South Kensington Museum which



FIG. 53. *Cole Farm.*

(From a postcard by Young & Cooper, Maidstone.)

are of Jacobean date, but there is one preserved in Hereford Cathedral which seems to be of thirteenth century work. Similar chairs are represented in early manuscripts and they were probably used by our Saxon ancestors. This one, may I say, should be carefully preserved, and I should like to congratulate the farmer's son on his drawings, for they are quite difficult pieces of "perspective." Fig. 55 is a more ordinary type and chairs like this may still be made: they are nice and unaffected.

The Women's Institutes for which I have been so proud to write are not only splendidly useful and friendly things in themselves, but they point **the way**, I think and hope, to other developments which will in time help to keep the world in repair. While pride and joy in work are being killed at one end by machine production, we must try to revive it as a game at the other.

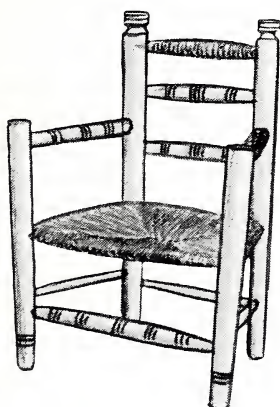


FIG. 54. *Child's Armchair.*



FIG. 55. *Simple Chair.*

Seven or eight years ago I was talking to a gifted friend of mine who lives in a crowded London street and he suggested that what his neighbours really wanted most was a sort of co-operative workshop where they might themselves make some of the things they needed—simple furniture, household mendings and the like. Perhaps they do not even realise what it is they want, but only personal doing and making things will content them. This, I believe, is a true and valuable observation, even an invention.

Delight in doing and making will one day have to be refounded in some such scheme of voluntary *recreative* work. At present all the solid forces are against it. Our custom of production for money-profit to a machine owner is radically opposed to any methods of producing useful work purely for the joy of making—and what would the cinemas do if the people could amuse themselves without paying for machine acting from America? Even our Arts and Crafts schools are at present deeply impeded by the understanding that they shall produce nothing useful, for that would interfere with “trade.”

I wrote to an eager, helpful friend to ask him what he thought of the possibility of getting something like Men’s Institutes established which would make opening of play-workshops one of their activities. Two or three months ago he replied that he had found out that co-operative spare-time workshops had been opened in Germany since the war. “In a German education paper this week there was a little note that at Essen in connection with Krupps’ a sort of Workers’ Educational movement has opened some large rooms for folk who wish to work for themselves. These rooms are for grown-ups and young to use for all sorts of odd mending and work. They recommend people to write about it, which I am doing.” Later: “I wrote to the man at Krupp’s, and he sent me full particulars as to how to fit up a work-room, and a list of the tools and things they provide. The workrooms are for men and women, they do woodwork, shoe-making, binding, needlework and household



FIG. 56. *Land Girl Milking.*

(Reproduced from a block made by Miss Bolton, Warwick.)

mending of all kinds, and there is a doll's or marionette theatre."

Just after this had happened a correspondent brought to my notice the work of the new Village Clubs Association. The statement on its origin, aims and objects points out that "the village community is the oldest of the units which make up the social and political structure of the nation. It still remains in form, but the communal spirit has decayed.

(1). A Village Club should be the centre of all social activities, and of all forms of physical and mental recreation :

(2). It should be self-supporting and free from the elements of patronage :

(3). The inhabitants of the Village without distinction of class or opinion should be eligible for membership."

This excellent scheme, which I trust will be successful, covers nearly all that I want, but I venture to recommend for consideration the idea of Play-workshops. We have to learn to love making things—one of the deepest instincts—over again.

These pages few and unsystematic have, as it were, written themselves going along, on no very coherent plan. They mix up some record of what is and has been with slight suggestions as to what we might aim at. On the side of record we need a group of little volumes on the national crafts and customary modes of life—farming, building, clothing, pottery, metalwork and other crafts, ship-building and fishing and the domestic arts. Above all it seems to me we want a study of the

English people in their types and habits ; not dressed in their Sunday-go-to-meetings, with a best hat and watch-chain, but with their ploughs, scythes, flails, shovels and hammers. Our painters ought to have done this, but they have been too busy providing fashionable vanities to undertake national records. On the side of development we must begin with clear sight of what now is, and of the growing untidiness of country things. Places for disposing rubbish have to be provided for villages, advertisements must be controlled and a general campaign of tidying up is needed—country scavenging and the making of things sweet and fair, mending fences, setting gates on their hinges and the like. Above all, sound pleasant cottages are required for Englishmen and their children to live in. There is much for the Institutes and Clubs and Scouts and Guides to do while we are turning this difficult corner in history.

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES

" . . . Mr. Lethaby writes in the character of a townsman who has gone out into the country and, wondering at what he sees and hears, collects stories of past customs of life and work and reports sporadic efforts that are being made to repair the losses which arise from the invasion of town conditions. There is much pleasant matter in the book, with rich patches of quotation, full of suggestion ; . . . "—*The Times Literary Supplement*, November 29th, 1923.

" . . . Against the tendency of the machine to enslave the man, Professor Lethaby sets up the ideal of voluntary happy work of individuals in their own homes, or in village clubs, institutes and common workshops, where men 'might themselves make some of the things they needed . . . Delight in doing and making will one day have to be refounded in some such scheme of voluntary recreative work' . . . "—*The Builder*, December 28th, 1923.

" This is a splendidly discursive little book containing more sound sense on such subjects as education and art in common things than can be found in most of the larger books written by specialists. Concerning education Mr. Lethaby remarks : ' Our present supposition, that education is knowing words, rather than things and deeds, will produce many unforeseen results.' . . . The author clearly shows, in the section dealing with Village Arts and Crafts, that art is not restricted to Art Galleries, but can be introduced into daily work, converting the drudgery which is associated with the earning of livelihood into real pleasure. The chapter on the teaching of drawing in the play-way is especially suggestive and should be read by all parents and teachers. . . . "—*The Spectator*, January 19th, 1924.

" This is a unique little book which we hope will be read by all interested in what one may describe as real country life.

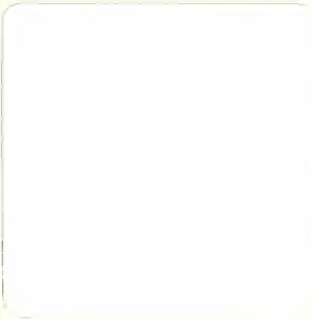
" It treats, in a manner entirely fresh and simple, of occupations such as drawing, designing and embroidery in all their stages,

" He pleads for the revival (' more or less supplementary to farming') of all those arts and crafts and old customs which have played such an important part in the building up of our national character and prosperity, and for the general cleaning up of our countryside. . . . "

" The charm of this little book lies in its unaffected and natural style. As the author says, ' These pages, few and unsystematic, have, as it were, written themselves going along, on no very coherent plan.' A plan of no uncommon risk, usually, but in the case of Mr. Lethaby's book, entirely successful."—*The Architects' Journal*, February 20th, 1924.

" It would be difficult to spend a shilling to better advantage than by buying this little collection of essays. Professor Lethaby writes with intimate sympathy and love of his subject and inspires his readers with a like enthusiasm. To him ' living and working are the two great realities.' . . . His philosophy of life is expressed in these beautiful words, ' Work is a sacred thing, and I have wished above all to stir the instinct for making and doing. Work is the great reality, beauty is the great aim. Full satisfaction is only to be found in the common beauty of common things of the common life.' " —*The Town Crier*, June, 1924.

" . . . by the chairman of the English Arts and Crafts Society, who is also Surveyor of the Fabric, Westminster Abbey . . . combines appreciation of the beauty in simple household arts and its influence on English life, with practical suggestions, . . . written with charm, and understanding."—*Journal of Home Economics*, Washington, U.S.A., August, 1924.



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